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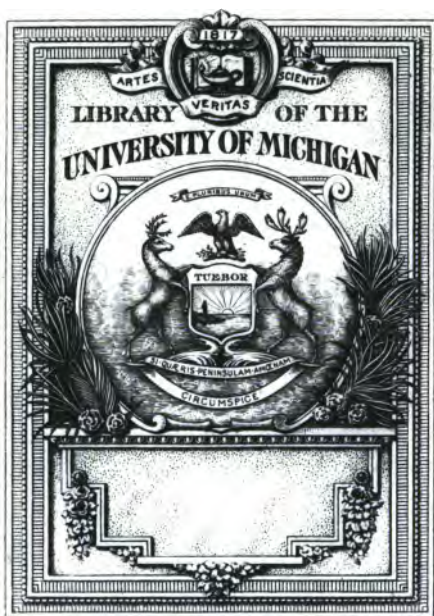
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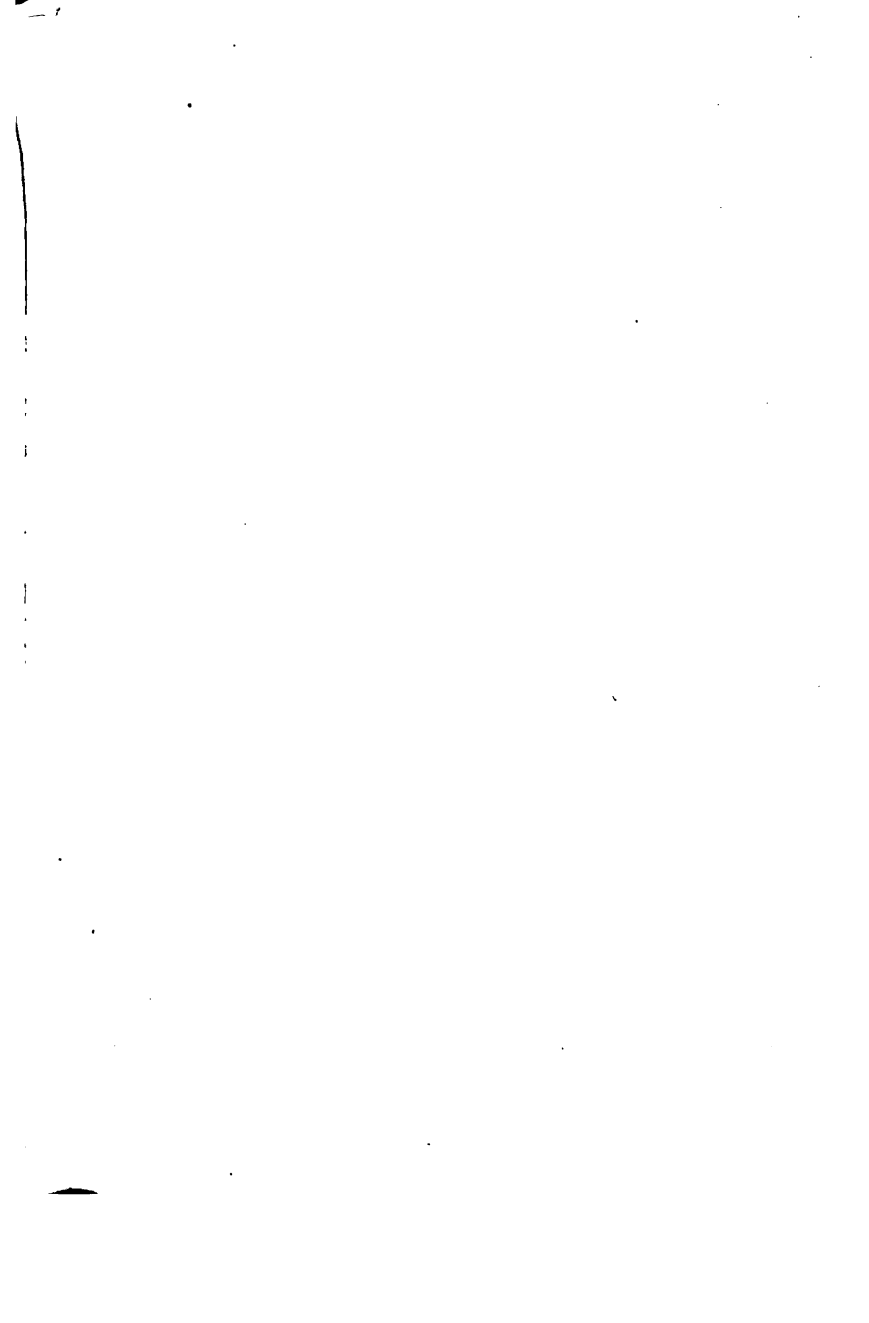
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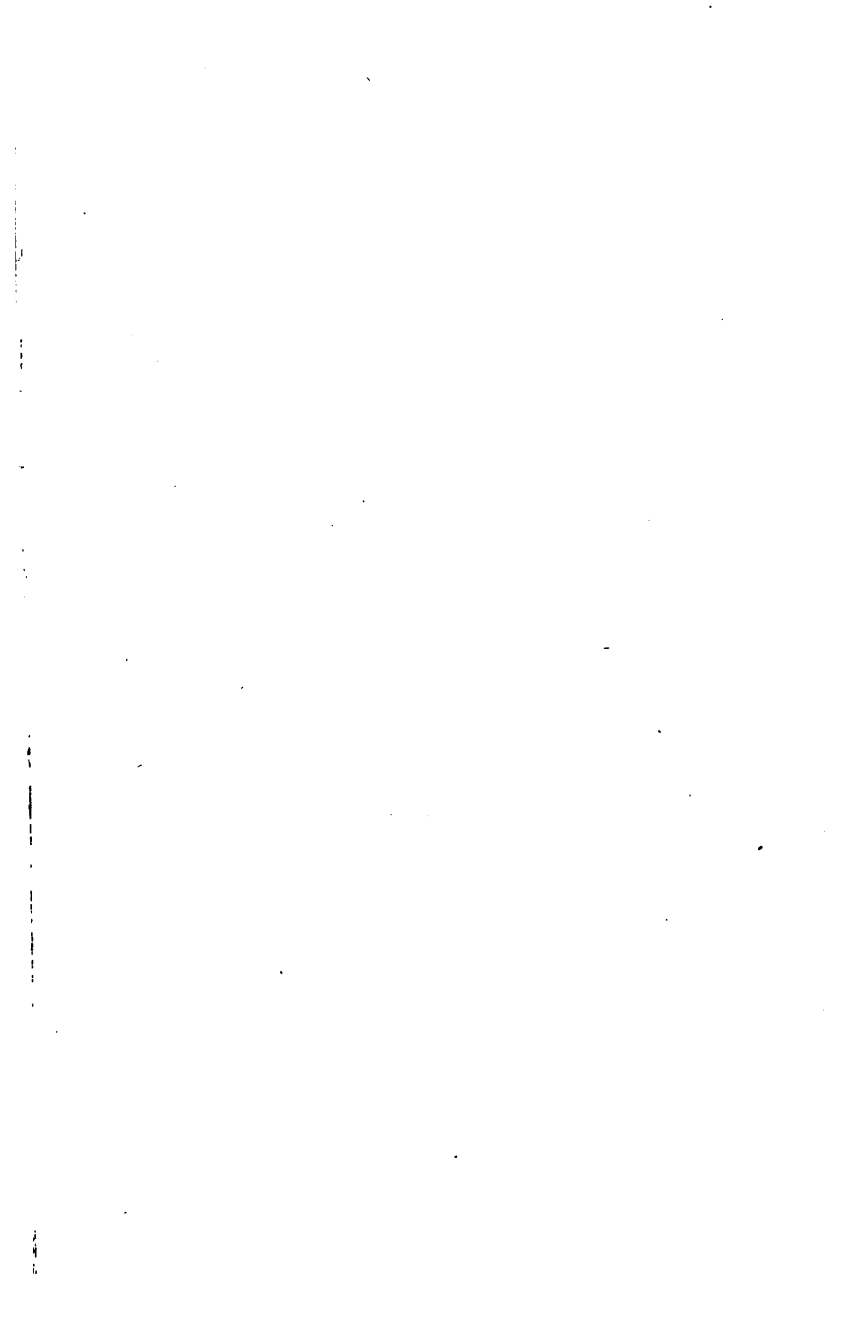
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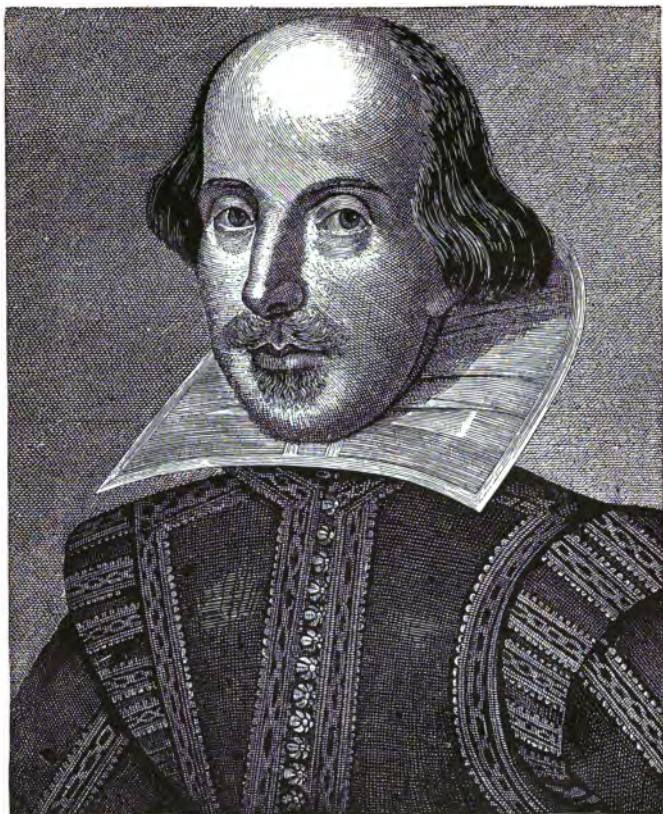
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Martin Droghda sculpsit London.

Wm Shakespeare
UNIV. OF MICH.

THE GLOBE THEATER SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare, What's in it for me

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED
BY SHAKESPEARE'S COMPANY

EDITED FOR THE STUDENT
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY
DANIEL HOMER RICH
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, NEWARK, N. J.



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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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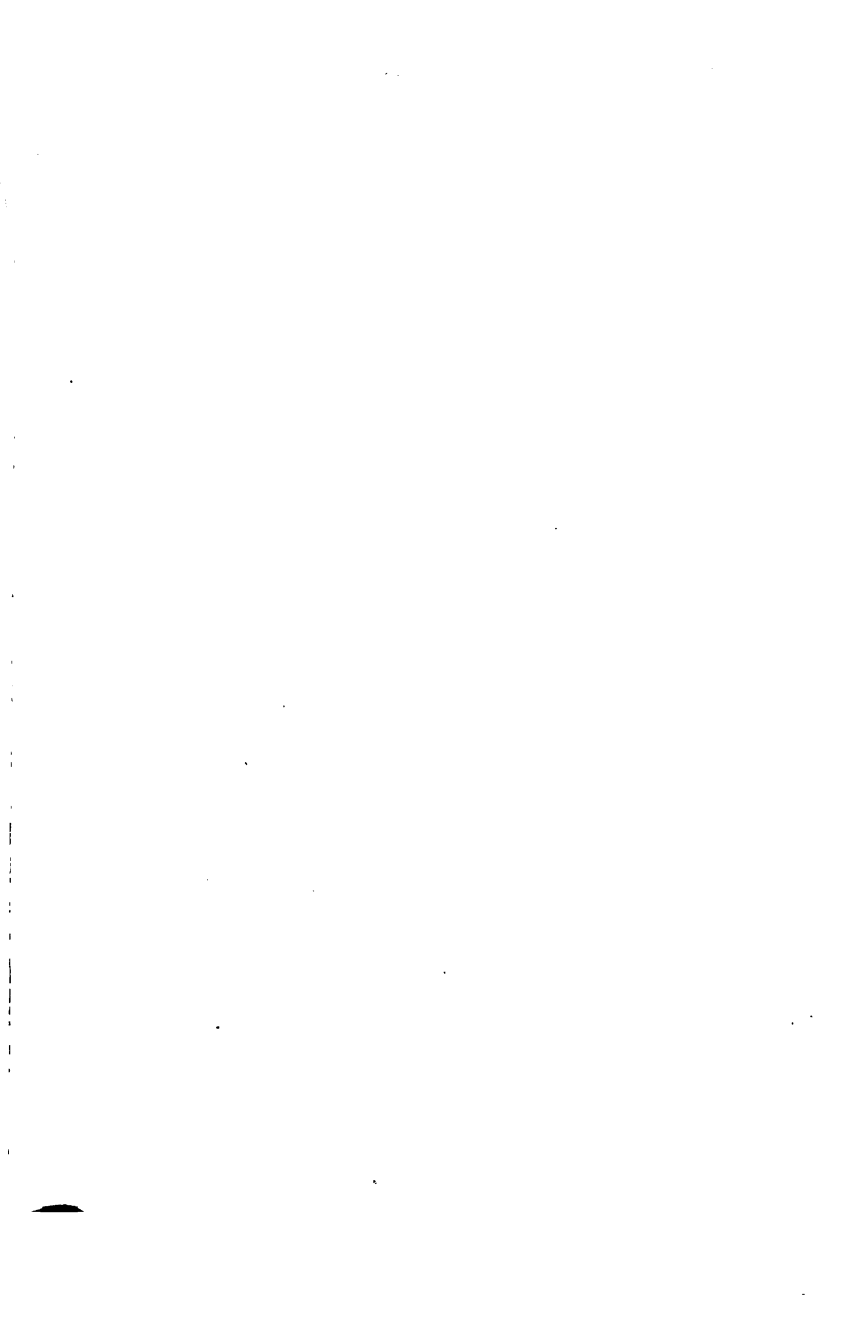
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*H.
Prof. W. W. Smith
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TO THE TEACHER

The object of this edition is twofold: first, to afford the pupil help of a very practical kind in solving the language problem inevitably connected with Shakespeare; and second, to present the play consistently as a performance on the stage of the Elizabethan theater rather than as a mere story in verse. It is in the first respect more elementary and in the second more advanced than previous editions intended for the use of the grade school or high school student.

With regard to the propriety of approaching the plays of Shakespeare from the standpoint of the acted drama little difference of opinion is found among teachers of the present generation. Doubtless an increasing number are coming to recognize that students deprived of a knowledge of Shakespeare's stage and audience, his dramatic aims and devices, the obvious laws of the drama which have held good from that day to this, and the principles which guided his poetic utterance, are cheated from the first of any opportunity to read the great dramatist aright. The present edition aims to provide such teachers with a simple working manual to guide, as far as may be, the study of the average pupil when not under the teacher's personal direction. It is hoped for the method taken that *The Merchant of Venice* will be made more than ever interesting in the class-room, better adapted to amateur

performance, and more useful as a guide to the other plays.

The text, except for obvious deletions and a few standard emendations, is that of the First, or Roberts Quarto of 1600, with stage directions from the Heyes Quarto of the same year. For convenience the scene-division, spelling, and place-indications of most modern texts have been retained where they are not misleading or contradicted by the early editions.

INTRODUCTION

I.—TO THE STUDENT

(To be read before beginning the study of the play.)

Use of Notes and Questions. If you will turn to the first page of *The Merchant of Venice* you will see that some of Shakespeare's words are followed by little circles (°), and others by the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. The circles mean that the words they follow have peculiar meanings; and it will be well to look them up, either in an unabridged dictionary, or in the notes, before attempting to read the scene as a whole. The numerals correspond to other numerals at the bottom of the page, where suggestions for study are made and questions asked which should prepare you to answer intelligently the questions of the recitation. A careful reading of the pages of this Introduction will put you in possession of most of the necessary information.

How to Use a Large Dictionary. In reading Shakespeare it is necessary to make frequent use of a large dictionary such as *Webster's*, the *Century*, or the *Standard*, if one is to get at the dramatist's real meaning. Many of Shakespeare's words are no longer used, and so do not appear at all in the smaller dictionaries. Others are still in good use, but in a later and therefore misleading sense, the meaning of Shakespeare's day having been practically forgotten. The more difficult

of such word problems are, of course, explained in the notes at the end of the book, but many of the easier ones are left to the dictionary and your own judgment.

The first thing to make sure of is that you have found the right part of speech: *n.* in all of the dictionaries standing for noun, *a.* for adjective, *v. i.* for intransitive verb, *v. t.* for transitive verb, etc. Ordinarily words are printed more than once—once, in fact, for each occurrence as a different part of speech; and some short-sighted students have been known to search blindly through ten or twelve possible meanings without finding the right one merely because they neglected to observe the use of the word in Shakespeare's line. When you have found the word in the right part of speech scan all definitions before coming to a conclusion. Do not thoughtlessly accept the first meaning given. In the *Standard* and *Century* dictionaries this is the modern meaning—just the one you do not want. Perhaps the third, fourth, or fifth definition, especially if it be followed by the abbreviation *obs.* or *arch.* (*obsolete* or *archaic*) is the one Shakespeare had in mind. If a quotation from Shakespeare is given in illustration you may be surer of your ground than before. *But in any case examine all definitions, and by referring back to the text make sure that you finally choose a meaning which fits the general sense of the line in which the word occurs.* By paying a little attention to such matters in the beginning you will save yourself a good deal of unnecessary work and a great many curious mistakes.

(**The Language of Shakespeare.** It must be borne in mind that Shakespeare lived more than three hundred years ago, and that the English of that period was in a sense a different language from our own. It was even pronounced differently.) If we could find ourselves

back in the days of Queen Elizabeth somewhat as the Connecticut Yankee found himself in the Court of King Arthur, we might very reasonably conclude that our English cousins had forgotten their native speech, and were using instead a strange mixture of Dutch, Latin, and French, with only here and there a familiar English word, the whole strange mixture tinged with a very broad Irish accent.

Moreover, in writing verse Shakespeare ordinarily allowed himself but ten syllables to the line, and among these ten syllables the accents must fall pretty regularly upon every other syllable; so that one can very easily account for many of his peculiarities of language merely by a knowledge of his verse. (See *Shakespeare's Verse*, APPENDIX, page 116.) Of course, like other poets, he used out-of-the-ordinary expressions for other reasons than those here suggested, but when we get a little used to his way of saying things we usually cease to find such matters troublesome.

The Language of Poetry. Besides being the greatest playwright and story-teller of his day, Shakespeare was one of the greatest poets who have ever written in any language; and a great part of his strength and beauty as a poet lies in the free, original use of words to which we have just been referring. You will scarcely hope to find the language so delightful as the story of the play at first reading; but it is hoped you will at least begin to like his poetry for its own sake, quite aside from the character and action it reveals. Perhaps you can tell, even before you have finished *The Merchant of Venice*, why it is that older readers, to whom the stories and persons of Shakespeare's pages have long since become familiar, witness his plays and study his lines as time goes on with increasing pleasure and profit.

The Play's the Thing. Anyone, to be sure, can enjoy the structure of the play and the story it tells, the many fine characters and the way they reveal themselves in speech, the humor, the fiery declamation, the tense and thrilling situations, the opportunity frequently offered of memorizing and enacting certain scenes, and the many other matters, large and small, which make Shakespeare's plays interesting on the stage or in the class-room. The questions at the bottom of each page remind you that *The Merchant of Venice* was written primarily to be acted by the members of Shakespeare's company, then called *The Lord Chamberlain's Servants*. The comedy should be read in the spirit in which it was written, as if played by costumed actors who come in through certain doors of a typical Elizabethan stage, and go out, it may be, through others, but who for the time being stand or stride about the platform, delivering their lines with considerable vigor and effect, and to the accompaniment of a good many more gestures than you or I would think of using in reading before a class. Imagine yourself a spectator in Shakespeare's theater rather than a student reading his play from a text-book. With the advice of your teacher memorize the lines of one character throughout an entire scene and help to play the scene in simple Elizabethan fashion before the class. There is more in this than a mere exercise in stagecraft; it is a sure method of discovering for yourself the true quality of the poet's verse.

Paraphrasing. Here and there you are asked to paraphrase a difficult speech. This means that you are first to study its meaning by means of the dictionary and notes, and then to write out in your note-book a prose version, or translation, so to speak, which may

follow the language of Shakespeare wherever his meaning is clear, but which will represent your own explanation wherever the language is obscure. Do not try to condense the meaning, but rather to expand it. A good paraphrase will usually occupy more lines in writing than the original occupies in print. The object, of course, is to explain clearly what the poet's meaning is, not to improve on his way of saying things.

A Hint. In this connection it may be well to suggest that Shakespeare frequently explains himself. If you discover a particularly difficult passage, one which seems just as dark after careful study as before, read the lines next following to see if the same thought has not been expressed in simpler terms. It would seem that the dramatist realized his own occasional obscurity, but rather than cancel the lines just written resorted to explanation and repetition of his idea to enforce its meaning. There is, of course, no short cut to a knowledge of Shakespeare; nothing can ever take the place of consistent dictionary study and diligent inspection of the notes; but many passages in *The Merchant of Venice* are best understood as a whole in the light of their setting.

The Note-Book. It is an excellent plan to keep a note-book in which to write class notes, directions, and assignments given you by your teacher, brief answers to the questions asked at the bottom of each page, passages to be "scanned" or memorized, and an outline of the play by scenes. (See the outline suggested below.) For your own convenience this should be a large, loose-leaf note-book, a few pages of which may be brought to the recitation each day between the covers of your text. Important points made in the class-room may thus be jotted down for study next

day, or for review when review time comes. A good note-book, besides being an index to your teacher of what you have done, will be found to be worth all the trouble it costs in those painful hours which precede monthly review or final examination.

Plan for an Outline. The following plan is suggested for an outline of the play by scenes:

(a) *Time.* The time noted should be dramatic time,—the day of the play, whether first, second, third, or fourth, etc., and also the approximate time of day,—forenoon, afternoon, night, early morning, or whatever the lines seem to indicate. Mention might also be made of the time between certain scenes when several days or weeks are supposed to have elapsed. In the drama we can never turn back the clock; each scene must be later than the one preceding; and just how much later it will be interesting to discover.

(b) *Place.* Place has been indicated in brackets at the beginning of each scene, but it is well to remember that Shakespeare did not write these place-directions, and that there is considerable reason to doubt the accuracy of many of them. The location of the scene, where it is essential, is easily inferred from the spoken lines of the actors, and, like the time, is ordinarily indicated near the beginning of the scene or act. In this connection read the account of the *Elizabethan Playhouse*, INTRODUCTION, page xix.

(c) *Plot.* Plot means simply a brief summary of the action that has taken place during the scene. Taken together, the plot summaries should tell the story of the play.

(d) *Purpose.* For the most part the dramatic purpose of each scene is simply to present a part of the story in action on the stage, and so to advance the plot;

so that in most scenes *purpose* may be said to be identical with *plot*. Some scenes are found, however, in which nothing of importance seems to have been accomplished. Why did Shakespeare write this scene? Why not leave it out in performance? What would be lost to the play if we did? The answer to these and similar questions should reveal the author's purpose in writing the scene.

A note-book record after some such plan as the above will put you in position at any time to review the play as a whole.

Technical Terms Connected with the Drama. In these days when everyone goes to the "movies," and most of us have access to interesting performances of plays, new and old, on the legitimate stage, it is more than ever important to understand a number of technical terms associated with the drama. About those which follow there should be no question.

Plot. The plot is the story of the play, reduced to its simplest terms. Often more than one plot is woven into a single play.

Comedy. This is the name usually given to a play which ends happily,—as we should like to have it end.

Tragedy. A tragedy, broadly speaking, is a play which ends with the death of the hero. In order that the audience shall not be disappointed the ending must be made to seem necessary, not accidental; and as a result tragedies are usually serious throughout.

Hero. The hero is the most important person in the play,—the man (or woman) without whom there would be no story to tell. Usually, but not always, he has the heroic virtues of honesty, courage, self-sacrifice, etc., and we cannot help admiring him and wishing him success in his undertakings.

Villain. This obnoxious person, who, like the hero, may be of either sex, is the one who makes the most trouble for the hero. In many plays there is no villain, but there is always an

Opposing Force. (The opposing force is the stumbling-block put in the way of the hero which draws out his true qualities, and so makes the story interesting. Opposing force may be provided by the villain, or several persons acting as such; it may be simply an accident, unkind fate, a weakness in the hero's character, or any reasonable difficulty natural to the situation in which he finds himself.)

Rising Action. In a comedy, which, it will be noted, must end satisfactorily for the hero (rising action occurs whenever he is opposed. In a tragedy, where according to definition the hero must finally be overcome, rising action takes the opposite course, following in general the rising fortunes of the leading character.)

Falling Action. In a comedy action falls whenever the opposing force weakens or is overcome. In a tragedy falling action coincides with the downfall of the hero. (Note that the definitions are practically reversed in the two dramatic forms.)

Climax either in comedy or tragedy is the point at which the opposing force begins to weaken. In a comedy climax occurs when the hero begins to get the better of the situation.

Suspense occurs whenever the main action of the story is temporarily withheld to excite curiosity or to increase the interest of the audience in the situation.

Relief is a suspension of the main theme of the play for the opposite purpose,—to give the audience a brief opportunity to think of other matters, to laugh, or to meditate on the action just past.

II.—ELEMENTARY LAWS OF DRAMATIC CONSTRUCTION

What the Drama Is. A play is a story told on the stage by means of action and gesture as well as words, the object being to appeal to the eye as well as to the ear. How absolutely the drama may become a thing of the eye is shown by the development of the modern motion-picture play.

Impersonation. It is necessary for each character in the story to be represented by a person on the stage,—the actor, who for the time being must be the character represented, in manners, appearance, and voice, and whose only concern with telling the story has to do with his own part in it.

Dialog. Dramatic story-telling becomes therefore a matter primarily of action and dialog between two or more actors on the stage, not the monolog of ordinary oral story-telling.

Fitting the Story to the Stage. Both the nature of the story and the selection of its details are affected by the theater chosen for its performance. It would be obviously impossible to dramatize the animal stories of Kipling's *Jungle Book*, for instance, for animals cannot become actors and speak lines on the stage. The Greek drama is not the drama of today, largely because it was presented in a great, outdoor amphitheater seating thousands of people, where no modern arrangement of curtain, lighting, and scenery could be of service. It is very essential in reading the plays of Shakespeare to know the theater, stage, and audience for which he wrote. See *The Elizabethan Playhouse*, INTRODUCTION, page xix.

The Importance of the Audience. A story may be

written with no reader in mind, but a play cannot be presented without stage and audience. No drama can be truly said to be a drama which does not take the audience into consideration, first and last. The influence of the audience is shown in the following stage conventions:

Length of the Play. No audience is willing to sit in the playhouse for days at a time, witnessing a performance of indefinite length; and on the other hand most people want more than a few moments' entertainment in return for their admission fee. The length which has been found most desirable in a play is that which requires from two to three hours for performance.

Act and Scene Division. Since no one can expect to give undivided attention to any one matter even for two or three hours, it has long been customary to divide plays into *acts* or *scenes*, with waits between for the changing of scenery. Shakespeare's theater, however, had no painted scenery, and the necessary relief was provided by music and comic diversions on the stage rather than by waits between scenes.

Centralizing of Interest. Since the audience is on the whole a thoughtless group, in the playhouse rather to be amused than instructed, the story must be a simple one, focussed about the fortunes of a single person, the hero. It is fatal to deceive the audience in any essential particular, and impossible to hold it in suspense for any great length of time. Equally important is it to avoid anything that will confuse, disappoint, or divide its sympathies. A good play usually makes the spectators desire some one thing warmly, and in the last act brings the desired end to pass.

Introducing Characters. (Since the audience, except for applause and laughter, is a silent factor in the play,

it follows that all characters must introduce themselves, or be named by other characters in such a way and with such frequency as to place their identity beyond doubt. Similarly, because the audience can ask no questions, it is impossible for an important character to leave the stage without assigning a reason for the departure or informing us where he is going.)

Indirect Methods. In order that we shall gain an illusion of reality from the happenings on the stage, many devices are employed to hide the fact that the play has been written primarily with the audience in mind. (If a certain piece of information is to be given, some character inquires about it, and is informed by another character on the stage; if a particular person is needed later on in the scene, he is brought on under some pretext which we accept without question at the time of his appearance.) Only by bearing the audience constantly in mind can the student learn the numerous devices which make play-writing an art quite different from any other form of narration.

III.—THE ELIZABETHAN PLAYHOUSE

Origin. In all probability the drama in England took its origin in the church. It was the habit of the priests at the Christmas or Easter festival to impersonate various characters in the Bible story, Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds, Herod, even the angel at the tomb of Christ, and to act out a modified or dramatic service, first in Latin, but later in English. The object was to inform the people who could not read—and that meant nearly everyone in those days—of the true Bible narrative. These special services proved popu-

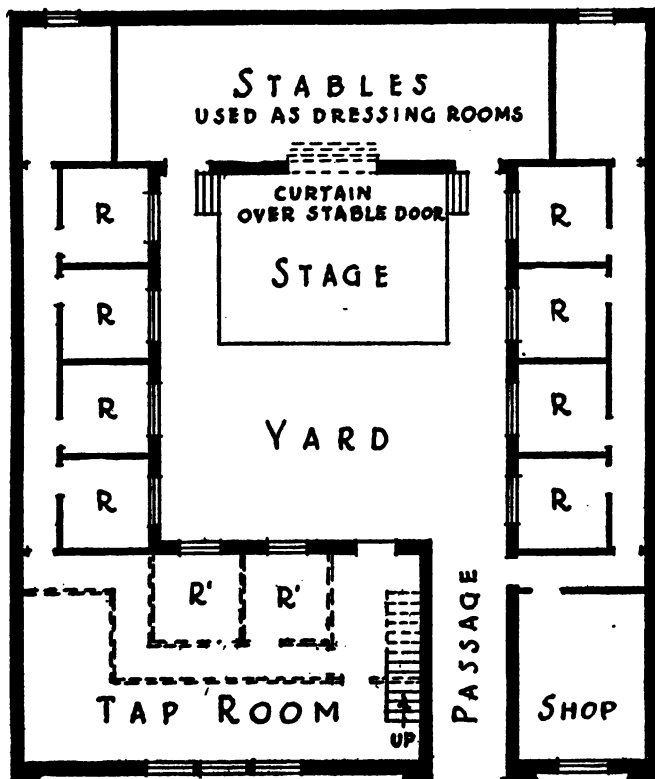
lar, and the practice was extended. In this way many Scriptural stories came to be put into dramatic form by the rude poets of the period; and were acted both in the churches and out of doors as a part of the public entertainment on holidays.

New Themes. Episodes in the lives of the saints provided additional stories for the edification of the people. Then the Morality play of abstract virtues and vices was imported from France, and playwrights began to draw on secular subjects for their themes. Comic scenes were very popular, but tragedy, strangely enough, came to be even more popular than comedy as time went on.

Travelling Companies. Hitherto all the plays had been amateur plays and the actors amateur actors,—priests, choir-boys, or members of some guild, or trade-union; but now companies of professional players began to spring up, who attached themselves to an obliging earl or nobleman and travelled over rural England, calling themselves, let us say, the *Earl of Leicester's Servants*. Their art was naturally an improvement on the old pageants, or Mystery plays, and they were enabled to charge an admission and make a fair living in this way. Such travelling companies were familiar sights in Stratford when Shakespeare was a boy, playing dramas with subjects taken from the Greek and Latin poets rather than from the Bible.

The Inn Yards. The inn yards of the day afforded convenient enclosures for the performance; moreover, they were real centers of the social life of the village, attracting crowds of tradesmen, farmers, horse dealers, village hangers-on, travellers, gentlemen of quality, and, we can be sure, the inevitable small boy who always manages to attend such affairs without paying for the

privilege. Women were in the minority, for the crowd was boisterous and the plays frequently vulgar. A ground plan of the average inn yard is given here for



PLAN OF TYPICAL ENGLISH INN

purposes of comparison with the early theaters in London.

The rooms of the inn, with windows looking upon the courtyard, provided the best points of vantage

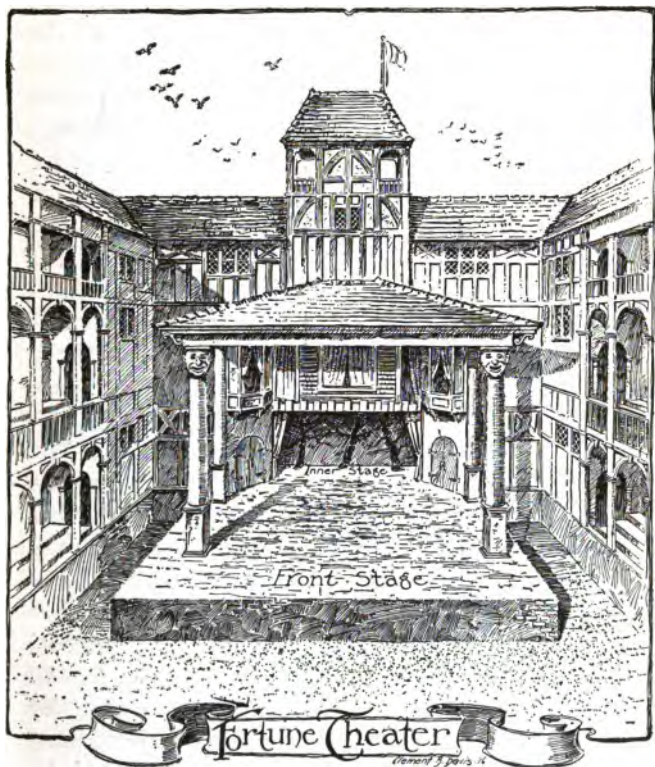
for the performance, and were usually occupied on the days plays were to be seen.

London Theaters. The first permanent theaters in London were constructed on the general lines of an inn, with courtyards open to the sky and tiers of balconies or "stalls" on three sides of the enclosure. By this time, however, theatrical entertainments had become associated with a rough-and-tumble sort of audience which did much to bring them into disrepute among the decent residents of the city. The Puritans, then a growing power in the government of London, could scarcely be expected to welcome into their midst amusements which depended for their appeal largely on dance and song, the art of the clown and juggler, and, a thing expressly forbidden by Scripture, the disguise of men or boys in women's dress to play the female rôles. So when the time came for new theaters the Corporation of London required them to be built outside the city limits. The site chosen lay across the Thames, in the district known as the Bankside. Here had long stood the "Bull-ring" and "Bear Garden," arenas for fighting bulls and bears with troops of dogs; here arose the "Hope," the "Swan," the "Rose" theater, and finally, in 1599 the "Globe," so named, probably, from its circular or octagonal shape. The disreputable and motley population of London flocked to these Bankside entertainments,—outlaws, thieves, sharpers of all sorts, likewise dandies from the city to occupy the gentlemen's rooms or the expensive stool-seats on the stage itself, scholars and university men, poets and rival playwrights, perhaps an occasional fine lady on adventure bent, heavily veiled, or wearing the disguise of a boy page to some nobleman.

The "Fortune." The carpenter's contract for

The Elizabethan Playhouse xxiii

building the Fortune theater has, fortunately, come down to us; so we are enabled to make a fairly good guess as to its appearance. (See the accompanying drawing.) The stage of this theater must have been very

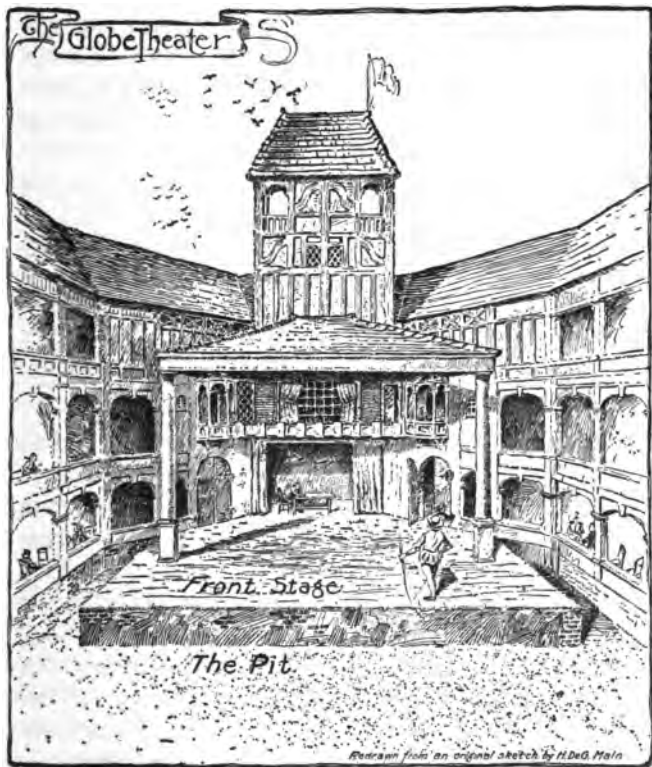


(Fortune sketch)—From a sketch by J. E. Griffith.

much like that of the "Globe," for the specifications repeatedly state that the builder is to imitate the stage and staircases of the "Globe" in building the "Fortune." The platform proper was forty-three feet by twenty-

eight, the rear half being covered for the protection of the players on rainy days. There were the usual entrance doors at the sides, and a balcony above, framed in to look like the tower of a castle, with parapet and passages behind to right and left. A very essential part of the "Fortune," as of other theaters of the period, is what is called the *inner stage*, a recess or closet curtained off from the main platform, which could be used as a room, the interior of a house or palace, a tomb, the cave of a hermit, the inside of a tent, or for other similar purposes. When the curtains were drawn various "properties" could be brought on from the sides,—chairs, tables, beds, even shrubbery and the branches of trees to make the stage look like an orchard or forest for outdoor scenes. It should be noted that the inner stage provided a third means of access to the platform, and was almost as much used for entrance and exit as were the side doors.

The "Globe." The editor's reconstruction of the probable interior of the Globe theater is given on page xxv. It is based in part on the implied similarity between the "Fortune" and the "Globe," as shown in the contract already referred to, but more upon a comparative study of the plays known to have been enacted in the theater which has always been primarily associated with Shakespeare's name. There were curtains for the balcony as well as for the inner stage below, a grating for the castle window, and bay-windows which jutted out over the doors, thus affording a view from above of the doings within the inner stage. The shape of the building as a whole was doubtless octagonal, with the usual "gentlemen's rooms" or balconies around the sides. Dressing-rooms and stairways to the balcony and tower were "behind scenes," to left and right. Spectators



From a sketch by H. De G. Main.

probably reached the galleries by an outside staircase, entirely disconnected with the stage.

The Performance. The performance took place in the afternoon, never at night. It began usually about two o'clock. No painted scenery was used, and so there were no long waits between scenes. Acted in the Elizabethan fashion, it has been found that even the longest Shakespearean plays can be given without cuts in from two and one-half to three hours. Night scenes

were indicated by the bringing on of torches or lanterns, not, of course, by darkening the stage, as in modern playhouses. Since there was no drop-curtain in front all characters had to enter at the beginning of a scene and leave at the end; and dead bodies had to be carried out. Most of the action took place pretty well forward, on the *front stage*, where it could be seen by everyone in attendance. The large, open building and the disorderly character of the average audience made loud speaking on the part of the actors a necessity; and, as might be expected under these conditions, long, declamatory speeches are frequently provided by the dramatist.

The Audience. Shakespeare was undoubtedly put to it to hold an audience of the kind that assembled in his Bankside playhouse, made up as it was of the extremes of London society, nobles, vagabonds, scholars, tradesmen from the country, poets, venders of refreshments, even occasional thieves and pickpockets, if we are to believe a contemporary account. He employed various devices to hold the attention of the "groundlings," as he called them,—prologs to explain the play, trumpets, drums, orchestral music, and singing, mobs on the stage one of whose duties seems to have been to shout the mob in the "pit," clowns, dancers, pantomime, the spectacle of witchcraft and necromancy,—these and many other eye-catching and ear-splitting devices to supplement the legitimate declamation of the actors and the interest natural to the play. Battles and sword-fighting, ghosts, gorgeous costume, processions of kings and princes to delight the eye and arouse the patriotism of an Englishman,—all these things had their part in making Shakespeare's plays successful and his name famous throughout the land.

Women's Parts. It has been generally supposed that there were no women actors in Elizabeth's time, the female parts being all taken by men or boys. Evidence of many kinds can be found to show that this was the usual custom, but it would seem strange if the rule were not evaded now and then in favor of the talented wife or sweetheart of some player attached to the theater. Either Shakespeare had two very remarkable boy actors in his company for such parts as *Portia* and *Nerissa* and a third equally competent to play *Jessica* (the *Calpurnia* of *Julius Cæsar*, and the *Olivia* of *Twelfth Night*), or else these parts were frankly entrusted to women, who may have pretended to be boys, as was usual, and were perhaps clever enough to carry out the deception with the audience.

IV.—HOW TO STAGE "THE MERCHANT OF VENICE"

It is a mistake to suppose that we must have a theater in order to play Shakespeare. The average class-room will do very well for a stage, and costumes are not an essential part of the performance. You will remember that the Elizabethan stage was originally a mere platform; and for this reason any open space or passageway with an entrance at either end will serve for most Shakespearean scenes. An inner stage becomes a necessity if a whole play is to be performed, but ordinarily there will not be time to rehearse an entire play, and the inner stage may be dispensed with. The essential thing about any play is the play itself; the audience which assembles to see amateurs perform does not come to see fine costumes, elaborate scenery

or stage setting, but to hear a story told by actors on the stage. Given the actor who means business and the story to tell, and the play is made; for the audience is usually not hard to please.

Let us select a typical scene from *The Merchant of Venice* and stage it in the average class-room. A good one to select is the second scene of Act II, in which Launcelot "tries confusions" with his blind old father.

Strictly speaking, Launcelot should enter through the curtains of the inner stage, to indicate that he is leaving Shylock's house. This really makes little difference, however, and we shall assume that he enters from the left. His soliloquy is accompanied by a great many comical gestures, and is frankly addressed to the audience; he is taking us into his confidence, and impersonating the devil in conversation with himself. At the lines, "I will run, fiend," he runs off right, but is met at the entrance by Old Gobbo, who nearly bumps into him. While Launcelot is giving his ridiculous directions for finding the Jew's house (which all the while is directly in front of us) he leads the old man about the stage, turning him about several times to confuse him. Gobbo should carry a crooked stick, and appear very much bent from age. When Launcelot says, "Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son; give me your blessing," he should kneel beside his father, facing front. Old Gobbo, after fumbling vainly to find him, takes hold of Launcelot's back hair. Launcelot remains kneeling until his father begins the speech, "Lord, how art thou changed!"

Bassanio, Leonardo, and the servant enter from the right, advancing only a step or two before Bassanio stops, addresses the servant, and dismisses him through the door they have just used. They then advance,

meeting the clown and his father in the middle of the stage. The relative position of the four should be as follows:

X Launcelot

X Bassanio

X Leonardo

X Old Gobbo

When Bassanio says to Leonardo, "Give him a livery more guarded than his fellows," he advances in front of the Gobbos to the left, Leonardo following; while the two clowns go out through the inner stage or the door right. After his dismissal Leonardo starts toward the left entrance, but is met by Gratiano, whose question he answers before he goes out. Gratiano advances to Bassanio and takes a position on Bassanio's left for the dialog that follows. At the close of the scene Bassanio leaves by the left entrance and Gratiano by the right.)

To play the trial scene, Act IV, Scene 1, an inner stage should be improvised by placing two screens on either side of the raised platform which supports the teacher's desk, and moving the desk well back to make room for the principals in the action. The Duke, as judge, takes a seat behind the desk, with the clerk at his left, and soldiers standing to right and left. The "magnificoes" are grouped to left and right on the front stage, helping to make up the usual court-room audience. Those with speaking parts stand in front of the others, but not directly in front of the Duke. In this scene all characters enter from the left. No chair is necessary except the prisoner's chair for Antonio, placed at the right of the judge's desk and slightly in front. A small, low platform should be placed to the right of Antonio's chair for Portia to stand on during her examination of the case.

Bassanio and his friends take places at the right, standing. Antonio is brought on by a jailer and seated amid a dead silence, the jailer standing behind him. All face the left entrance through which Shylock is soon to appear. Shylock takes his stand at the left, in front of the "magnificoes." During the progress of the scene, which should be carefully memorized and rehearsed, all actors should remember to use frequent gestures of the arms, body, and head to emphasize the spoken lines, not forgetting an occasional bow to the Duke. During the latter part of the scene Gratiano grows so excited that he frequently rushes across the front of the stage to taunt Shylock, retiring to his place at the nod or frown of the Duke. Portia herself approaches the Jew during the delivery of her famous speech, "The quality of mercy is not strained," thereafter taking her place again at the right. When the case begins to go against Shylock the soldiers behind the Duke step down and take charge of him, but eventually allow him to go out alone and in silence. Then a buzz of conversation springs up; Antonio is congratulated by his friends, and the Duke and the "magnificoes" go out left.

The Duke, as judge, may enter from the right in the space behind the screen, and go out in the same way at the close of the trial, following what was probably the Elizabethan custom of using the inner stage entrance.

V.—LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

Birth. William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon, in the County of Warwick, England, and baptized, according to the parish register, on April 26,

1564. If, as was customary, three days elapsed before baptism, the day of his birth corresponds exactly to the day of his death, fifty-two years later,—April 23, 1616.

Parents. His father was John Shakespeare, a tradesman of Stratford, who came into some landed property through his wife, and who prospered for a time in various occupations in and about Stratford, buying and selling leather, wool, and meat; tanning, and glove-making. He must have had some standing in the community, for he was made alderman the year after the poet's birth. By 1568 John Shakespeare had become Justice of the Peace and High-Bailiff of the town, and it now became his duty to welcome and witness the performances of travelling companies of actors. It is easy to imagine the influence which these actors and their plays may have had on the mind of John Shakespeare's eldest son.

Education. There is no record of William's having attended Stratford Grammar School, but his parents at this time could well afford the luxury of an education for him, and it is probable that he attended this, the only public school of the village, from his seventh to his thirteenth year, acquiring here the "small Latin and less Greek" Ben Jonson later credits him with knowing. Latin and the Elements of Logic and Rhetoric were the principal studies at the Grammar School, and Shakespeare's writings show considerable familiarity with both. For his knowledge of history he was dependent on books like Plutarch's *Lives* and Holinshed's *Chronicles*. As a young man he was doubtless interested in sports,—riding, hawking, and hunting; but he seems never to have been an accurate student of natural science. Shakespeare's mind, we may be certain, was of the sort which schooling does little for. Books were

not so much his tools of education as men; his learning, like that of many another wise man, was gained largely in the school of hard knocks.

Poverty. It is supposed that the boy left school at about the age of twelve, perhaps earlier, to help his father in business and eke out the failing fortunes of the family. Imagine Shakespeare a butcher! Aubrey, writing a century later, says of him "When he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he killed a calf he would do it in a high style, and make a speech." Certainly nothing but the direst necessity would have driven his high spirit to following his father's trade. In 1578 John Shakespeare was compelled to mortgage his wife's property of Asbies, and the same year the town council excused him from the payment of the poor-rate, or tax for the poor. From this time on the elder Shakespeare's affairs went from bad to worse. In the year 1586 three warrants were issued for his arrest for debt, and the same year he was removed from his position as alderman because of his failure to attend the meetings of the council. As late as 1592 he is mentioned by Sir Thomas Lucy as one of those who "coom not to Churche for fear of processe for debtte."

Marriage and London. In 1582 William Shakespeare, then only eighteen, married Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years older than himself. A daughter, Susanna, was born to them in 1583, and two years later twins, Hamnet and Judith. It is said that about this time or before Shakespeare fell into ill company, among other pranks taking part in a raid on Sir Thomas Lucy's deer-park. Whatever may have been the truth about the deer-stealing, it is known that soon afterward he left Stratford, his wife and children, and went to seek his fortune in London. He had doubtless al-

ready discovered his gift for poetry, and since poets were much in demand as playwrights, felt that he could make a better living as actor or dramatist in one of the established theaters of the metropolis.

Progress. He attached himself eventually, if not from the beginning, to the group of actors known as the Lord Chamberlain's Servants, the company which owned the Blackfriars theater and in 1599 built the "Globe." There is a tradition that he began as prompter and call-boy; however that may have been, he soon became an actor, though not the best in the company, was advanced to the position of playwright, and when the Globe theater was built became part owner of the enterprise.

Residence in London. An old London lawsuit has recently been brought to light in which Shakespeare was called as a witness. It furnishes us with the information that he lived for years with a family of French descent at the corner of Silver and Monkwell Streets, within fifteen minutes' walk of the river, where he could take a boat or ferry to the Globe theater on the south bank of the Thames. The fact that this family was of French descent goes far toward explaining Shakespeare's ready command of spoken French, and his whole part in the affair shows him in a human light, gentle and kind-hearted in his dealings with other folk. From other sources we know that he was called "gentle Will Shakespeare" by his contemporaries.

The Bankside. The district south of the Thames was scarcely the place Shakespeare and his associates would have chosen for the building of the important new Globe theater, but various forces had combined to outlaw the art of acting in the eyes of the decent residents of London. (See *The Elizabethan Playhouse*,

INTRODUCTION, page xxii.) As a consequence most of the later theaters were built outside the city proper in the section known as the Bankside. Strangely enough, it was with such amusements as cock-fighting and the pitting of bears against troops of city dogs that Shakespeare and his fellow-dramatists had to compete. An immortal tragedy might be followed the next afternoon in the same theater by a bull-baiting. No wonder the plays, many of them, are full of scenes intended to appeal to the vulgar ear; no wonder the drama of the day was scarcely regarded as literature by the London reading public.

Copyright Laws. It was during this period of Shakespeare's residence in London, lasting about twenty-five years, that all his great poems and plays were written. Only the poems were published by permission during his lifetime, *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, *Lucrece* in 1594, and the *Sonnets* (probably without Shakespeare's authorization) in 1609. For the plays there seem to have been no effective copyright laws; dramas were regarded as the property of the theater, or the company, rather than of the author, and had little value to the author after they had been performed. It was usual for playwrights to take old plays and adapt them to the needs of the company with which they were then associated, without troubling to ask the writer's permission; and it is small wonder, therefore, that stolen copies found their way into print now and then. *The Merchant of Venice* was one of the plays so printed during Shakespeare's lifetime, two quarto editions appearing in 1600.

The Plays. There are thirty-seven plays in all, falling roughly into three groups—Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. The comedies are plays in which there

is a happy ending; in the tragedies the hero is killed. The histories all present significant events in the lives of the sovereigns for whom they are named, and most of them have tragic endings. Some of the best of Shakespeare's plays are here named, with the probable date of composition or performance.

COMEDIES

A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1594
 The Merchant of Venice, 1598
 Much Ado About Nothing, 1598
 As You Like It, 1599
 Twelfth Night, 1600
 The Tempest, 1611

HISTORIES

Richard III, 1592
 King John, 1593
 Richard II, 1593
 I Henry IV, 1596
 II Henry IV, 1596
 Henry V, 1598

TRAGEDIES

Romeo and Juliet, 1592
 Julius Cæsar, 1599
 Hamlet, 1601
 Macbeth, 1605
 King Lear, 1606
 Coriolanus, 1609

Comment. Even a very incomplete list such as the foregoing, containing only about one-half of the plays, shows tremendous activity on the part of the author.

Considered purely as plays, some are, of course, better than others; but it may safely be said that the worst of them are better than the average Elizabethan tragedy; and all are written in a verse which for freedom, strength, and beauty has never been paralleled in English letters.

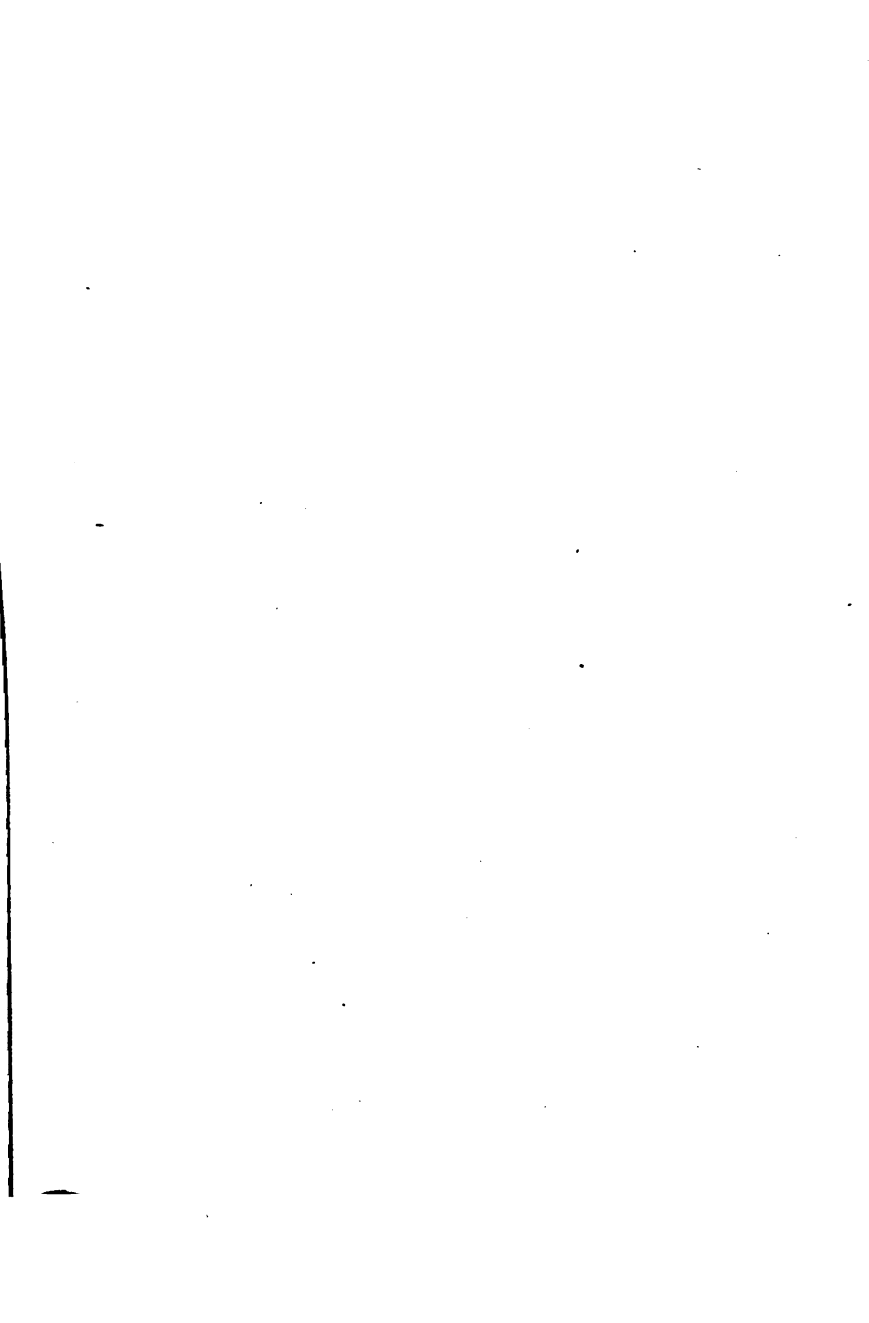
Financial Success. Shakespeare was acknowledged to be the most popular dramatist of his time. He won the love of his fellow actors, the respect of critics in his own profession, like Ben Jonson and John Webster, and, what was doubtless equally to his liking, the substantial satisfaction of a good income from the plays and his share in the theater. Not did he entirely forget Stratford. In 1597 he bought New Place, the largest house in the town, and helped materially in establishing his father's family on its old basis of prosperity. In 1599 John Shakespeare was granted a coat of arms and a place in the gentry. In 1602 the poet bought more Stratford real estate; and as late as 1613 we find him investing in a house in London.

Success at Court. Shakespeare won favor, too, at court. His company frequently acted before Queen Elizabeth by royal command. From the first he had had the patronage and financial support of the Earl of Southampton, to whom his poems are dedicated; and there is reason to believe that he had a firm friend at court in the person of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke.

Family. Shakespeare seems to have visited Stratford rather infrequently at first, though he doubtless contributed regularly to the support of his wife and children, and afterward came to see them with greater frequency. His son, Hamnet, died in 1596; eleven years later the eldest daughter, Susanna, was married to

Dr. John Hall; and in 1616, the year of the poet's death, his daughter Judith married Thomas Quincey, a vintner of Stratford. His wife outlived him by several years.

Retirement and Death. In 1616 the Globe theater burned to the ground, and Shakespeare may have made this the occasion for retiring from his labors. He had given the world the best that was in him; he had acquired considerable wealth and an enviable reputation as a poet; and he doubtless enjoyed the opportunity of returning to his native city,—the city he had left in his youth under circumstances which must have seemed very little to his credit,—and living quietly among its people in the capacity of a successful man of affairs. He seems never to have taken any special interest in the preservation of his plays, probably regarding them as the property of the company with which he had so long been associated, and subject to revision at its discretion. Neither plays nor poetry are mentioned in his will, dated March 25, 1616; though he does not forget the two members of his company who later published the First Folio edition of his complete works. This document, made toward the end of March, states that he was then in good health, but by April 23 of that year the great dramatist was no more.



THE MOST EXCELLENT HISTORY
OF THE
MERCHANT OF VENICE

**WITH THE EXTREME CRUELTY OF SHYLOCK THE JEW
TOWARDS THE SAID MERCHANT, IN CUTTING A JUST
POUND OF HIS FLESH, AND THE OBTAINING OF PORTIA
BY THE CHOICE OF THREE CHESTS**

**AS IT HATH BEEN DIVERS TIMES ACTED
BY THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S SERVANTS**

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

THE DUKE OF VENICE.

THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, }
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON. } *suitors to Portia.*

ANTONIO, *a merchant of Venice.*

BASSANIO, *his friend, suitor to Portia.*

SALANIO, }
SALARINO, } *friends of Antonio and Bassanio.*
GRATIANO, }
SALERIO, }

LORENZO, *in love with Jessica.*

SHYLOCK, *a rich Jew, father of Jessica.*

TUBAL, *a Jew, Shylock's friend.*

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, *the clown, servant to Shylock.*

OLD GOBBO, *father of Launcelot.*

LEONARDO, *servant to Bassanio.*

BALTHASAR, }
STEPHANO, } *servants to Portia.*

A JAILER.

PORTIA, *a rich Italian lady.*

NERISSA, *her waiting-maid.*

JESSICA, *daughter of Shylock.*

SCENE: *Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont.*

I 1, 2, 3
 II 6,
~~III~~ III 1, 2
 IV 1
 V 1

The Merchant of Venice

[ACT FIRST.]

SCENE I

[*Venice. A street.*]¹

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SALANIO.

Ant. In sooth,² I know not why I am so sad.
 It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
 But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
 What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
 I am to learn;
 And such a want-wit³ / sadness makes of me
 That I have much ado to know myself.

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
 There, where your argosies^o with portly sail,
 Like signiors^o⁴ and rich burghers^o on the flood, 10

¹ No act or scene divisions are made in the first printed copies of *The Merchant of Venice*, but those indicated by Rowe, an eighteenth-century editor, are retained in this edition for convenience. Theobald, Capell, and others supplied the place-indications which, with certain changes, are here reprinted in brackets. It is well to remember that Shakespeare probably intended no scene division of the play, and no more frequent change of place than is indicated in the spoken lines of the actors.

² *Sooth* means *truth*. How do you imagine these Italian gentlemen are dressed?

³ One whose wits are lacking.

⁴ Words marked (°) are explained in the notes at the end of the book.

Or, as it were, the pageants^o of the sea,
 Do overpeer the petty traffickers,¹—
 That curt'sy to them,^o do them reverence,—
 As they fly by them with their woven wings.²

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,^o
 The better part of my affections would
 Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still *(always)*
 Plucking the grass; to know where sits the wind;
 Peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads;⁴
 And every object that might make me fear 20
 Misfortune to my ventures out of doubt
 Would make me *sad*.

Salar. My wind, cooling my broth,
 Would blow me to an ague,⁵ when I thought
 What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
 I should not see the sandy hour-glass run
 But I should think of shallows and of flats,^o *sand left here by the*
 And see my wealthy Andrew⁶ dock'd in sand,
Lowering dipping *Vailing*^o her high top lower than her ribs
 To kiss her burial.⁷ Should I go to church
 And see the holy edifice of stone, 30
 And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
 Which touching but my gentle vessel's side
 Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
 Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks;
 And, in a word, but even now worth this,

¹ That is, the smaller vessels.

² The pronouns *they* and *them* do not refer to the same antecedents. What are the *woven wings* of the ships?

³ *Still* here means *always*.

⁴ *Roads* is used in the sense of *harbors*. Compare *Hampton Roads*, Va.

⁵ Would give me a chill. Look up *ague* in the dictionary.

⁶ My rich sailing-vessel upturned on the beach.

⁷ That is, her burial-place.

And now worth nothing?¹ Shall I have the
thought² *fourthought*
To think on this; and shall I lack the thought,
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me
sad?

But tell not me; I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.³ 40

Ant. Believe me, no. I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one *bottom*⁴ trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
outcome Upon the *fortune*⁵ of this present year;
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you
are sad

Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed

Janus,⁶ 50

Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time;
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,⁴

And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;⁷

And other of such vinegar aspect

That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile

Though *Nestor*⁸ swear the jest be laughable.

¹ What gestures should accompany these last lines to make them clear?

² *Thought* means *forethought*; but in the next line it has its usual meaning. When Shakespeare deliberately repeated a word in this way he usually changed its meaning. Such a play on words is called a *pun*.

³ Why is the sadness of Antonio emphasized at the outset of the play? Edwin Booth referred to it as his "liver trouble."

⁴ *Peep through their eyes* is explained by the *laugh* of the next line.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO.

Salan. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano, and Lorenzo.¹ Fare ye well;

We leave you now with better company.

Salar. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry 60
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

Ant. Your worth is very dear in my regard.

I take it your own business calls on you,

And you embrace th' occasion to depart.

Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.

Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh?² Say
when?

You grow exceeding strange; must it be so?³ — *must you leave?*

Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.³

[*Exeunt SALARINO and SALANIO.*]

Lor. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you; but, at dinner-time,⁴ 70

I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

Bass. I will not fail you.

Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio;

You have too much respect upon the world.⁵

They lose it that do buy it with much care.

Believe me, you are marvellously chang'd.

Ant. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano

A stage where every man must play a part,

And mine a sad one.

¹ Observe how the audience is told who the new-comers are. They cannot of course wear labels on their backs. What is one of the first laws of the stage?

² When are we all going to get together again and have a jolly time?

³ How is this line an answer to Bassanio's question? Study its meaning carefully.

⁴ Notice that the time of day is here indicated. This is the first day of the play.

*what others
think of you*

Gra.

Let me play the fool.

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come; 80

And let my liver rather heat with wine

Than my heart cool with mortifying¹ groans.

Why should a man whose blood is warm within

Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?²Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice³

By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—

I love thee, and it is my love that speaks,—

There are a sort of men whose visages⁴Do cream and mantle⁵ like a standing pond,And do a wilful stillness entertain⁶ *silent for a reason*With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion⁷ *to win a reputation*Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;⁸ *knowledge for*As who should say,⁹ "I am Sir Oracle,¹⁰ *only truth teller*

And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!"

O my Antonio, I do know of these,

That therefore only are reputed wise

For saying nothing; when I am very sure,

If they should speak, would almost damn those ears

Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.⁴

I'll tell thee more of this another time. 100

But fish not with this melancholy bait

For this fool gudgeon,⁵ this opinion.⁶

Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile;

I'll end my exhortation after dinner.⁶¹ Groans of death.² Look up *jaundice* in the dictionary.³ Find the meaning of the word *visage* as a noun.⁴ These lines might be paraphrased: "When, I am very sure, if they were to speak, they would force those who heard them to call them fools; and so bring down upon their heads the well-known Biblical condemnation, 'He that calleth his brother a fool is in danger of hell-fire.'"⁵ Don't try to create such an opinion of yourself.⁶ What sort of person do you imagine Gratiano to be?

Lor. Well, we will leave you, then, till dinner-time.

I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gra. Well, keep me company but two years more,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own
tongue.

Ant. Farewell; I'll grow a talker for this gear.^o 110

Gra. Thanks, i' faith; for silence is only commendable
In a neat's¹ tongue dried, and a maid not vendible.

[*Exeunt GRATIANO and LORENZO.*]

Ant. Is that anything now?^o *Does that mean anything?*

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more
than any man in all Venice.² His reasons are as
two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you
shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you
have them they are not worth the search.³

Ant. Well, tell me now, what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage 120
That you to-day promis'd to tell me of?

Bass. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate
By something showing a more swelling port^o *mainer*
Than my faint means⁴ would grant continuance;
Nor do I now make moan to be abridg'd^o - *cut off*
From such a noble ^{rate} *rate*;^o but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time,^o something too prodigal,

¹ Look up *neat* as a noun in your dictionary. Only the large dictionaries, such as *Webster's International*, or the *Standard*, should be used if you want to make sure of getting the right meaning.

² Some one usually mentions the place in the early part of the scene. Why?

³ A good speech to memorize.

⁴ Look up the word *means* as a noun. Paraphrase, that is, explain clearly in writing, the meaning of lines 122-125.

Hath left me gaged.¹ To you, Antonio, 130
 I owe the most in money and in love;
 And from your love I have a warranty²
 To unburden all my plots and purposes
 How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Ant. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
 And if it stand, as you yourself still³ do,
 Within the eye of honour,^o be assured *honourable plan*
 My purse, my person, my extremest means,⁴
 Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft, 140
 I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
 The self-same way with more advised watch
 To find the other forth; and by adventuring both
 I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof^o *experiment*
 Because what follows is pure innocence.
 I owe you much; and, like a wilful youth,
 That which I owe is lost; but if you please
 To shoot another arrow that self way
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
 As I will watch the aim, or^o to find both 150
 Or bring your latter hazard back again,
 And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Ant. You know me well; and herein spend but time
 To wind about my love with circumstance;⁵
 And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
 In making question of my uttermost,⁶

¹ *Gaged*, of course, means *engaged*. Why not the longer word?

² If you are not sure of the meaning of *warranty* look it up.

³ *Still* again in the sense of *always*. Frequently so in Shakespeare.

⁴ *Means* is here used in the same sense as above. Did you look it up in line 125?

⁵ The lines might be paraphrased as follows: "You know me well; and are only wasting your time by making question of my love."
⁶ *Utmost*.

Than if you ~~had~~ ^{will} made waste of all I have;
 Then do but lay to me° what I should do
 That in your knowledge may by me be done,
 And I am prest unto it;° therefore, speak. *will do it once* 160

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
 And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
 Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes¹ from her eyes
 I did receive fair speechless messages.
 Her name is Portia; nothing undervalu'd
 To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.²
 Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;
 For the four winds blow in from every coast
 Renown'd suitors; and her sunny locks
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece; 170
 Which makes her seat³ of Belmont Colchos'
 strand,°

And many Jasons come in quest of her.
 O my Antonio, had I but the means
 To hold a rival place with one of them
 I have a mind presages° me such thrift° *success*
 That I should questionless be fortunate!

Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
 Neither have I money nor commodity
 To raise a present sum. Therefore go forth;
 Try what my credit can in Venice do. 180
 That⁴ shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
 To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.

¹ Sometimes is equivalent to formerly, at one time.

² The Portia of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*,—one of his most admired characters.

³ Look up the word *seat* in a good unabridged dictionary. What part of speech,—noun, adjective, or verb? Don't accept the first meaning given, but inspect the entire list of definitions until you have found one that fits the line in which the word occurs. A smaller dictionary may not contain the meaning sought.

⁴ What is the antecedent of *that*?

*Portia's
promises*

Go, presently¹ inquire, and so will I,
 Where money is; and I no question make
 To have it of my trust² or for my sake.³ [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE II]

[*Belmont. PORTIA'S house.*]³*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.**forth - pursued and*

Por. By my troth,⁴ Nerissa, my little body is
 aweary of this great world.

Ner. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries
 were in the same abundance as your good for-
 tunes are; and yet, for aught I see, they are as
 sick that surfeit⁵ with too much as they that
 starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness,
 therefore, to be seated in the mean;⁶ superfluity⁷

¹ *Presently* in its old sense of *immediately—at this present moment*. Keep a lookout for this word, and remember the Shakespearean meaning.

² What has happened in this scene? Enter a brief summary of it in writing in your note-book,—a single sentence will be enough if well chosen. What was the author's purpose in writing the scene besides telling a part of the story? What information has the audience been put in possession of? Enter several items under the head of *purpose*.

Have you noticed that this scene is written in poetry throughout? To be sure, the lines do not rhyme, but poetry nevertheless it is, and of a high order. How many syllables are in the average line? On which do the accents ordinarily fall? Is the language poetic in tone?

³ How was Shakespeare's audience made aware of a change of scene?

⁴ Look up this word in the dictionary as an intransitive verb (*v. i.*).

⁵ Such juggling with words is common in Shakespeare. What are the two meanings of the word *mean*?

comes sooner by white hairs, but competency^o
lives longer.

10

Por. Good sentences, and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were
good to do, chapels had been¹ churches, and poor
men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good
divine² that follows his own instructions. I can
easier teach twenty what were good to be done
than be one of the twenty to follow mine own
teaching. The brain may devise laws for the
blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree; 20
such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er
the meshes of good counsel the cripple.³ But
this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me
a husband. O me, the word "choose"! I may
neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom
I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter
curbed by the will⁴ of a dead father. Is it not
hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor re-
fuse none?^o

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men 30
at their death have good inspirations; therefore
the lottery that he hath devised in these three
chests of gold, silver, and lead,—whereof who
chooses his meaning chooses you,—will,⁵ no
doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one
who shall rightly love. But what warmth is
there in your affection towards any of these
princely suitors that are already come?

¹ *Had been* is Shakespearean for *would have been* or *would be*.

² Find the meaning of this word as a noun.

³ Hares, or rabbits, were formerly caught in nets.

⁴ Another pun on *will*. What two meanings of the word are intended?

⁵ What is the subject of *will . . . be chosen*?

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them I will describe them; and according to my description level at my affection. 40

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that's a colt¹ indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts^o that he can shoe him himself.

Ner. Then there is the County^o Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say, "If you will not have me, choose."² He hears merry tales, and smiles not. I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher^o when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two! 50

Ner. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth I know it is a sin to be a mocker; but he!—why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine. He is every man in no man; if a throstle³ sing he falls straight a capering; he will fence with his own shadow. If I should marry him I should marry twenty hus- 60

¹ A pun, or play on words, is intended on *colt*. In Shakespeare's time the word evidently meant a foolish young fellow.

² Can you imagine Portia's elaborate mimicry of the Count's grand manner? The trouble with the Count seems to be that he is too much impressed with his own importance.

³ A *throstle* is a thrush. If you do not understand *capering* in the next line, look up *caper* in the dictionary as an intransitive verb. Don't read past any word you do not understand.

bands. If he would ¹ despise me I would forgive him; for if he love me to madness I shall never requite ² him.

Ner. What say you then to Falconbridge, the young baron of England? 70

Por. You know I say nothing to him; for he understands not me nor I him; he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English.³ He is a proper man's picture; but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show?^o How oddly he is suited! ⁴ I think he bought his doublet^o in Italy, his round hose^o in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere. 80

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him; for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able. I think the Frenchman became his surety, and sealed under ⁵ for another.

Ner. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

¹ These *if*-clauses now require the subjunctive form of the verb: "If I *were* to marry him," and "If he *were* to despise me."

² What is the meaning of *requite*?

³ Although the play is written in English, the audience is supposed to understand that the principal characters are Italians speaking their own language.

⁴ Before you look this word up try to determine what its meaning must be from the lines which follow.

⁵ *Sealed under* means *signed under*, that is, agreed to give the Englishman another box on the ear in return for the one he had given the Scotchman. Can you tell why this line would raise a laugh in the days of Queen Elizabeth?

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober; 90
and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is
drunk. When he is best he is a little worse
than a man; and when he is worst he is little
better than a beast. An¹ the worst fall that ever
fell I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

Ner. If he should offer to choose and choose the
right casket, you should^o refuse to perform your
father's will if you should refuse to accept him.

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee,
set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the con- 100
trary casket; for if the devil be within and that
temptation without I know he will choose it. I
will do anything, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to
a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of
these lords. They have acquainted me with
their determinations; which is,² indeed, to re-
turn to their home and to trouble you with no
more suit, unless you may be won by some
other sort than your father's imposition³ de- 110
pending on the caskets.

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla^o I will die as
chaste as Diana,⁴ unless I be obtained by the
manner of my father's will. I am glad this par-
cel of wooers are⁵ so reasonable, for there is not
one among them but I dote⁶ on his very ab-

¹ *An* has the meaning of *if*.

² If *determinations* is the antecedent of *which*, what should be the number of the verb, singular or plural? For this grammatical construction see *Shakespeare's Grammar*, p. 114.

³ Find the meaning of *imposition* from the verb *impose*.

⁴ Diana was the Roman goddess of the hunt.

⁵ Another peculiar grammatical construction similar to that of line 107 of this scene. Did you read the explanation on page 114?

⁶ *Dote on*, of course, means *am fond of*.

sence; and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

Ner. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that 120 came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think he was so called.

Ner. True, madam; he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Por. I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a SERVING-MAN.

How now! What news? 130

Serv. The four strangers^o seek for you, madam, to take their leave; and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco; who brings word the prince his master will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach. If he have the condition^o of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.^o 140

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah,^o go before.

Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer another knocks at the door.¹ [*Exeunt.*^o

¹ What information have you been put in possession of by this scene? State the essential points in a single sentence, and write them in your note-book.

Do you like what you have seen of Portia? Why?

[SCENE III]

[*Venice. Before SHYLOCK's house.*]*Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK, the Jew.*¹*Shy.* Three thousand ducats;^o well.*Bass.* Ay, sir, for three months.*Shy.* For three months; well.*Bass.* For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.*Shy.* Antonio shall become bound; well.*Bass.* May you stead^o me? will you pleasure me?
shall I know your answer?*Shy.* Three thousand ducats for three months, and
Antonio bound. 10*Bass.* Your answer to that.*Shy.* Antonio is a good² man.*Bass.* Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?*Shy.* Ho, no, no, no, no. My meaning in saying he
is a good man is to have you understand me that
he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposi-
tion. He hath an argosy³ bound to Tripolis,
another to the Indies; I understand, moreover,
upon the Rialto,^o he hath a third at Mexico, a 20
fourth for England, and other ventures he hath,

¹ Through which one of the three entrances does Shylock appear upon the stage? If he chooses the right one his appearance alone will be sufficient to warn the audience of a change of scene from Belmont. What is the time? If we find no warning to the contrary in the spoken lines we may assume it is still the *first day of the play*, somewhat later than Scene I.

² What are two possible meanings of the word *good*?

³ Look up the word *argosy*.

squandered¹ abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.²

Bass. Be assured you may.

Shy. I will be assured I may;³ and, that I may be 30
assured I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

Shy. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into.⁴ I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto?⁵
Who is he comes here? 40

Enter ANTONIO.

Bass. This is Signior Antonio. *grafter*

Shy. [*Aside.*] How like a fawning publican^o he looks!

I hate him for he is a Christian;

But more for that^o in low simplicity

¹ *Squandered* is here used in its older sense of *scattered*.

² What elements do you find in Shylock's character? A good many are brought to light during this scene.

³ What word does Shylock emphasize in speaking the line, "I will be assured I may"? What kind of a voice does he have, pleasant or unpleasant? How is he dressed?

⁴ If you do not recall the Bible story of the evil spirits and the swine look it up in the eighth chapter of Matthew.

⁵ *Rialto* probably refers to the bridge leading to the Rialto proper.

He lends out money gratis¹ and brings down
The rate of usance² here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip³
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation; and he rails,⁴
Even there where merchants most do congregate, 50
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Curs'd be my tribe
If I forgive him!⁵

Bass. Shylock, do you hear?

Shy. I am debating of my present store;
And by the near guess of my memory
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
Do you desire? [*To ANTONIO.*] Rest you fair,
good signior;

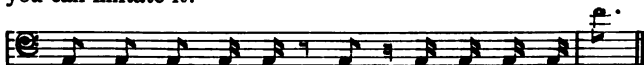
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.⁶

Ant. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow

¹ What is the meaning of *gratis*?

² *Usance* means *interest*, or, as it was formerly called, *usury*. Although the taking of interest on money was legal in Shakespeare's day, it was still regarded by most people as unjust and mean on the part of the creditor.

* The phrase, "Catch him upon the hip," is used in wrestling. According to Gardiner, Edmund Kean, one of the many great actors who have played the part of Shylock, used to deliver this line with "the yell and choked utterance of a savage." Gardiner represents his reading of the line musically as follows. Perhaps you can imitate it:



If I can catch him once up - on the hip.....

⁴ Look up *rail* as a verb.

⁵ Why is this speech of Shylock's necessary?

• What trait of Shylock's character is shown by this line?

By taking nor by giving of excess,^o
 Yet to supply the ripe wants of my friend
 I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd¹ *informed*
 How much ye would?

Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Ant. And for three months.

Shy. I had forgot; three months, you told me so.

Well then, your bond; and let me see,—but hear,
 you,—

Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow ⁷⁰
 Upon advantage.^o *interest*

Ant. I do never use it.

Shy. When Jacob graz'd his uncle Laban's sheep,—

This Jacob from our holy Abram was,

As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,^o

The third possessor;² ay, he was the third,—

Ant. And what of him? did he take interest?

Shy. No, not take interest; not, as you would say,

Directly interest. Mark what Jacob did.

When Laban and himself were compromis'd^o *had agreed.*
 That all the eanlings³ which were streak'd and
 pied^o *spotted - a streaked*

80

Should fall as Jacob's hire, . . .

The skilful shepherd peel'd me⁴ certain wands . . .

And stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,⁵

Who, then conceiving, did in eaning time^o *laning time*

Fall parti-colour'd^o lambs, and those were Jacob's.

many called.

¹ Possess'd often means *informed*.

² A re-reading of Genesis, chapters 27 to 31, will make clearer the events to which Shylock alludes in this and the following speeches.

³ Look up *eanling* in the dictionary.

⁴ The word *me* here is unnecessary. See SHAKESPEARE'S GRAMMAR, *Ethical Dative*, p. 114.

⁵ *Ewes* are female sheep.

This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;
And thrift is blessing if men steal it not.

Ant. This was a ^{chance}venture,¹ sir, that Jacob served for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven. 90
Was this inserted to make interest good?²
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.
But note me, signior.

Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can ^{quote}cite^o Scripture for his purpose.³ *the tempt. of*
An evil soul producing holy witness⁴ *chastity?*
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart.
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

Shy. Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the
rate— *indebted* 101

Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding^o to you?

Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated^o me
About my moneys and my usances.
Still⁵ have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine;⁶ *long drink.*
And all for use of that which is mine own. 110

¹ This was a chance he took, not a certainty like the taking of interest.

² Paraphrase this line.

³ Alluding to the story of Christ's temptation in the wilderness told in the opening verses of the fourth chapter of Matthew.

⁴ That is, quoting Scripture.

⁵ What meaning has the word *still*? It has occurred in this sense before.

Well then, it now appears you need my help.

Go to, then; you come to me and you say

"Shylock, we would have moneys;" you say so,—

You, that did void your rheum^o upon my beard, *spit on*

And foot me as you spurn^o a stranger cur

Over your threshold; *heel* moneys is your suit.

What should I say to you? Should I not say,

"Hath a dog money? Is it possible

A cur can lend three thousand ducats?" Or

Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key, 120

With bated¹ breath and whispering humbleness,

Say this:

"Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;

You spurn'd me such a day; another time

You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies

I'll lend you thus much moneys?"²

Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,

To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.³

If thou wilt lend this money lend it not

As to thy friends; for when did friendship take

interest A breed⁴ for barren metal of his friend? 131

But lend it rather to thine enemy;

Who if he break,^o thou mayest with better face

Exact the penalty.

Shy.

Why, look you, how you storm!⁵

I would be friends with you, and have your love,

¹ Find *bate* as a transitive verb.

² Do you think Shylock justified in his attitude toward Antonio? One of the chief merits of the play is the way in which the poet makes Shylock a repulsive figure, and yet manages to keep our sympathy for him in the crisis to come.

³ This may have been mere bravado on Antonio's part, but it indicates the regard in which Jews were generally held for centuries in Europe.

⁴ That is, interest.

⁵ Who has been "storming," Shylock or Antonio?

Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
 Supply your present wants, and take no doit¹
 Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me.
 This is kind I offer.

Bass. This were kindness.²

Shy. This kindness will I show. 140

Go with me to a notary, seal me there
 Your single bond;^o and, in a merry sport,
 If you repay me not on such a day,
 In such a place, such sum or sums as are
 Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
 Be nominated for^o an equal^o pound
 Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
 In what part of your body pleaseth me.

Ant. Content, i' faith. I'll seal to such a bond,
 And say there is much kindness in the Jew. 150

Bass. You shall not seal to such a bond for me;
 I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

Ant. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it.
 Within these two months,—that's a month before
 This bond expires—I do expect return
 Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shy. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
 Whose own hard dealings teaches^o them suspect
 The thoughts of others!³ Pray you, tell me this:
 If he should break his day what should I gain 160
 By the exaction of the forfeiture?
 A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
 Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
 As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say

¹ Find an appropriate meaning for the word *doit*.

² Emphasize *were* in reading. The figure of speech is called *irony*.

³ What gesture does Shylock make to accompany these lines? What trait of character is shown by them?

To buy his favour I extend this friendship;¹

If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;

And for my love I pray you wrong me not.

Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.²

Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's.

Give him direction for this merry bond, 170

And I will go and purse³ the ducats straight;

See to my house, left in the fearful guard

gave Of an unthrifty knave;⁴ and presently

I will be with you.

Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit SHYLOCK.*

The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.⁵

Bass. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

Ant. Come on. In this there can be no dismay;

My ships come home a month before the day.⁶

[*Exeunt.*

¹ Shylock, it will be observed, has given up his claim for interest on the borrowed money, and so can make a point of his generosity, though a poor one.

² Why does Antonio not go elsewhere for his loan, rather than enter into such an agreement with a man who is evidently not his friend? There is but one answer: if he did there would be no play. Most of us are willing to grant almost anything to make the conditions of a story.

³ What must this word mean?

⁴ Launcelot Gobbo, of whom more presently.

⁵ Do you think Antonio is really convinced of Shylock's good intentions? What exit did Shylock use when he left the stage?

⁶ The last person to leave the stage frequently speaks a little rhyming couplet similar to this. Watch for other instances of rhyme at the end of scenes.

[ACT SECOND.]

[SCENE I]

[Belmont. PORTIA'S house.]

Flourish° of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, a tawny Moor all in white, and three or four followers; with PORTIA, NERISSA, and their train.

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion,¹
 The shadow'd livery° of the burnish'd sun,
 To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
 Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
 Where Phoebus' fire° scarce thaws the icicles,
 And let us make incision for your love
 To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
 I tell thee, lady, this aspect° of mine
 Hath fear'd² the valiant. By my love, I swear
 The best-regarded virgins of our clime 10
 Have loved it too. I would not change this hue
 Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
 By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
 Besides, the lottery of my destiny
 Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.
 But if my father had not scanted° me
 And hedg'd me by his wit³ to yield myself
 His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
 Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair 20

¹ How many syllables must there be in *complexion* in order to fill out the ten-syllable line? How is the actor who plays Morocco "made up"?

² Hath made the valiant to fear,—an instance of *prolepsis*.

³ *Wit* usually means *wisdom*.

As any comer I have look'd on yet¹
For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you;
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar²
That slew the Sophy^o and a Persian prince,
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,^o
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey, 30
To win thee, lady.³ But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas^o play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand.
So is Alcides^o beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Por. You must take your chance;
And either not attempt to choose at all,
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong, 40
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage; therefore be advis'd.

Mor. Nor will not.^o Come, bring me unto my chance.

Por. First, forward to the temple;⁴ after dinner

¹ Not so complimentary a remark as it seems, if we remember Portia's comments on the other suitors.

² Look up the word *scimitar* if you do not understand its meaning.

³ What seems to be the leading trait in Morocco's character?

⁴ Do you think the temple was represented visibly on Shakespeare's stage, or was it supposed to be behind scenes? If you have not already done so, read the section of the INTRODUCTION called *The Elizabethan Playhouse*, glancing again at the drawing of the stage of the Globe theater on page xxv.

Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then!

To make me blest or cursed'st among men.

[*Cornets,*^o and *exeunt*.]

[SCENE II]

[*Venice. The street before SHYLOCK'S house.*]

*Enter LAUNCELOT, the Clown.*¹

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me, "Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot," or "good Gobbo," or "good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away." My conscience says, "No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo," or, as aforesaid, "honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels." Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack.^o "Via!"^o says the fiend; "away!" says the fiend; "for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind," says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart,² says very wisely to me, "My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son,"—or rather an honest woman's son;—. . . my conscience says, "Launcelot, budge not." 10

¹ The clown is dressed in ridiculous patchwork, and amuses the audience by talking nonsense and "cutting-up" generally.

² Of course a great deal of the humor of this scene depends on the antics and facial contortions which Launcelot supplies to accompany the lines.

"Budge," says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "you counsel well;" "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well." To be ruled by my conscience I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark,^o is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew I should be rul'd by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal;¹ and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run. 20 30

Enter OLD GOBBO with a basket.

Gob. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. [*Aside.*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind,² high-gravel blind, knows me not. I will try confusions^o with him.

Gob. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's? 40

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left; marry,^o at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

¹ Launcelot's stupid variation for *incarnate*, meaning the devil himself.

² *Sand-blind* was a common expression for *partially blind*. Launcelot goes the phrase one better.

Gob. By God's sonties,^o 'twill be a hard way to hit.

Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?¹

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? [*Aside.*]

Mark me now; now will I raise the waters. 50

Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. No master; sir, but a poor man's son. His father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man, and, God be thanked, well to live.²

Laun. Well, let his father be what a^o will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Your worship's^o friend, and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But I pray you, ergo,^o old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?³

Gob. Of Launcelot, an 't^o please your mastership. 60

Laun. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three^o and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Laun. Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post,^o a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father? 70

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman; but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

¹ What seems to be the condition of Old Gobbo's wits?

² Well to do—wealthy. An absolute contradiction to "honest exceeding poor man" of the line above, but no matter.

³ That is, no longer a servant, but *Master* Launcelot. Plainly Launcelot has risen in the world since his father entered.

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me. It is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son. Give me your blessing;¹ truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but, at the length, truth will out. 80

Gob. Pray you, sir, stand up. I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing; I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

Laun. I know not what I shall think of that; but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man; and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother. 90

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed! I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipp'd might he be!^o what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse^o has on his tail.²

Laun. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward. I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him. 100

Gob. Lord, how art thou³ changed! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

¹ What action accompanies this request?

² In what position has Launcelot knelt?

³ *Thou* was a more familiar form than *you*. Old Gobbo has been using the "polite" form *you* until he is convinced of Launcelot's identity.

Laun. Well, well. But, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest¹ to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew. Give him a present! give him a halter.² I am famish'd in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs.³ Father, 110 I am glad you are come; give me⁴ your present to one Master Bassanio, who indeed gives rare new liveries. If I serve not him I will run as far as God has any ground.⁵ O rare fortune! here comes the man. To him, father; for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO and other followers.

Bass. You may do so; but let it be so hasted, that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock.⁶ See these letters delivered; put the liveries^o to making; and desire Gratiano to 120 come anon to my lodging.

[Exit one of his men.]

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship!

¹ *Set up my rest* was a common Elizabethan phrase meaning *determined, made up my mind*.

² A rope to hang himself with.

³ The clown has a genius for getting things mixed.

⁴ The Ethical Dative again. See *Shakespeare's Grammar*, p. 114. Whatever meaning the pronoun may once have had was lost by the time of Elizabeth. Shakespeare uses the form largely to give a flavor of the soil to the speech of certain homely characters.

⁵ He would have to run pretty far, or he would be caught and brought back to his master.

⁶ The *time* of the scene can be determined from this line. If we have had no indication to the contrary it is still the first day of the play.

Bass. Gramercy!^o wouldst thou aught with me?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

Laun. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man;
that would, sir,—as my father shall specify,—

Gob. He hath a great infection,^o sir, as one would
say, to serve—

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the 130
Jew, and have a desire,—as my father shall
specify,—

Gob. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence,
are scarce cater-cousins,—^o

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew,
having done me wrong, doth cause me,—as my
father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify¹
unto you,—

Gob. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow
upon your worship, and my suit is,— 140

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent² to
myself, as your worship shall know by this honest
old man; and, though I say it, though old
man, yet poor man, my father.³

Bass. One speak for both. What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. That is the very defect⁴ of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit.

Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd^o thee, if it be preferment⁵ 150

¹ What word does Launcelot intend here?

² Not *impertinent*, surely, but *pertinent*,—*pertaining to*.

³ These anxious stupidities on the part of Launcelot and his father make good fun on the stage. What is the relative position of the three men? Who is in the center? What gestures do the two clowns make to attract Bassanio's attention?

⁴ Substitute the right word.

⁵ Look up the accent of this word *preferment*. Did Shakespeare pronounce it correctly? How do you know?

To leave a rich Jew's service to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb is very well parted between
my master Shylock and you, sir; you have the
grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.¹

Bass. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out. Give him a livery
More guarded^o than his fellows'; see it done.

Laun. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I 160
have ne'er a tongue in my head.² Well, if any
man in Italy have a fairer table³ which doth
offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good
fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life;
here's a small trifle of wives; alas, fifteen wives
is nothing! eleven widows and nine maids is a
simple coming-in^o for one man. And then to
'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my
life with the edge of a feather-bed;^o here are
simple 'scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman 170
she's a good wench for this gear.⁴ Father,
come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the
twinkling of an eye.

[*Exeunt* LAUNCELOT and OLD GOBBO.⁵

¹ The old proverb ran: "The grace of God is gear [property or wealth] enough." Bassanio has the grace of God, and Shylock has gear enough.

² Launcelot's meaning is just the contrary—another instance of *irony*. Observe how he struts and plumes himself on his own cleverness.

³ The clown is now looking at the palm of his hand, and, being in good spirits, sees nothing but good fortune there.

⁴ If Fortune is a woman, as she is generally represented, she's good enough prophet for me.

⁵ Through what door do they go in order to take leave of the Jew? How does this help the audience to locate the scene?

Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this.
 These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,
 Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
 My best-esteem'd acquaintance. Hie thee, go.
Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. Where is your master?

Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks.

[*Exit.*

Gra. Signior Bassanio,—

180

Bass. Gratiano!

Gra. I have a suit to you.

Bass. You have obtain'd it.

Gra. You must not deny me; I must go with you to
 Belmont.¹

Bass. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gartiano:
 Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice,—
 Parts^o that become thee happily enough,
 And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
 But where thou art not known, why there they
 show

Something too liberal.^o Pray thee, take pain
 To allay with some cold drops of modesty 190
 Thy skipping spirit;² lest, through thy wild be-
 haviour,

¹ Gratiano's reason for going with Bassanio to Belmont does not appear till later.

² *Thy skipping spirit* is a good example of *metaphor*,—a common figure of speech in Shakespeare. Can the spirit *skip*,—*jump*? Then the expression is non-literal, a figure of speech. If a comparison is implied between the spirit and something which does skip or jump, as for instance a lamb, the figure of speech is known as metaphor.

I be misconstru'd° in the place I go to,
And lose my hopes.

Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,¹
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,—
Nay more, while grace is saying,² hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say "Amen";
Use all the observance° of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent³ 200
To please his grandam,° never trust me more.

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night; you shall not gauge
me

By what we do to-night.

Bass. No, that were pity.⁴
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well.
I have some business.

Gra. And I must⁵ to Lorenzo and the rest; 209
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt.*]

¹ Find an appropriate meaning for this word. What part of speech is the word *habit* here? Are you about to look for a modern meaning or an obsolete one?

² The custom of "saying grace" before meals is still practised in many households.

³ *Ostent* is a shortened form for *ostentation*,—the putting on of superior airs. Paraphrase the whole of Gratiano's jesting speech, lines 193 to 201. We can imagine the laughing manner of its delivery, the sweeping arm-gestures and flourishes of the hat, and the pose he fetches at the words, "Never trust me more." Why not learn this speech and practise it at your leisure?

⁴ Supply *a.* Why didn't Shakespeare write the word?

⁵ The verb is frequently omitted in this way. Why?

[SCENE III]

Enter JESSICA¹ and LAUNCELOT.²

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so.

Our house is hell; and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste³ of tediousness.
But fare thee well. There is a ducat for thee;
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest.
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell. I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

Laun. Adieu! tears exhibit⁴ my tongue. Most 10
beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew!⁴ Adieu,—
these foolish drops do something drown my
manly spirit. Adieu. [*Exit LAUNCELOT.*⁵

Jes. Farewell, good Launcelot.

Alack, what heinous⁶ sin is it in me
To be asham'd to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian, and thy loving wife.⁷ [*Exit.* 20

¹ How is the audience made aware of who Jessica is? Look through her first speech for a clue.

² Through what entrance do they come on the stage?

³ A Gobboism for *inhibit*,—*stop the action of*.

⁴ Launcelot's extravagant praise may be due partly to the ducat Jessica has just given him.

⁵ Through what door?

⁶ Look up this word in the dictionary if you are not sure of its meaning. Don't let any new word escape you.

⁷ How has the plot been advanced by this scene? Are you keeping a note-book record of the action, scene by scene?

[SCENE IV]

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SALANIO.

Lor. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging, and return
All in an hour.

Gra. We have not made good preparation.

Salar. We have not spoke us^o yet of torch-bearers.

Salan. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly^o order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.

Lor. 'Tis now but four o'clock;¹ we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT, with a letter.

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

Laun. An it shall please you to break up² this, it
shall seem to signify. 10

Lor. I know the hand. In faith, 'tis a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gra. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.³

Lor. Whither goest thou?

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup
to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold here, take this.⁴ Tell gentle Jessica

I will not fail her; speak it privately. Go.

Gentlemen, *[Exit LAUNCELOT. 20*

¹ Note the time. Is this still the same day,—the first day of the play?

² What is meant by "breaking up" the letter? How do we know who Lorenzo is? Have we seen him before?

³ What action accompanies this line?

⁴ Take what?

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?

I am provided of a torch-bearer.¹

Salar. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

Salan. And so will I.

Lor. Meet me and Gratiano

At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salar. 'Tis good we do so. [*Exeunt SALAR. and SALAN.*]

Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Lor. I must needs tell thee all.² She hath directed

How I shall take her from her father's house;

What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with; 30

What page's suit she has in readiness.

If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,

It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;

And never dare misfortune cross her foot,³

Unless she do it under this excuse,

That she⁴ is issue to a faithless Jew.

Come, go with me; peruse^o this as thou goest.

Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE V ⁵]

*Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT.*⁶

Shy. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,

The difference of ⁷ old Shylock and Bassanio.

¹ Who is it? Do Salarino and Salanio know?

² For the benefit of those in the audience who may not have seen through his little scheme Lorenzo explains at length.

³ And never let misfortune dare to cross her path.

⁴ The *she's* are somewhat confused. Nowadays such a mixture of pronouns and antecedents would be regarded as bad writing; though, of course, something must always be pardoned to the needs of verse.

⁵ Has there been any change of place since Scene II of this act?

⁶ Through what entrance do they come in?

⁷ Why didn't Shakespeare write *between* instead of *of*?

What, Jessica!—Thou shalt not gormandise,¹
 As thou hast done with me:—What, Jessica!—
 And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out;—
 Why, Jessica, I say!

Laun. Why, Jessica!²

Shy. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Laun. Your worship³ was wont to tell me that I could
 do nothing without bidding.

*Enter JESSICA.*⁴

Jes. Call you? what is your will? 10

Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica;
 There are my keys.⁵ But wherefore should I go?
 I am not bid for love; they flatter me.
 But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
 The prodigal⁶ Christian. Jessica, my girl,
 Look to my house. I am right loath to go;
 There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
 For I did dream of money-bags⁷ to-night.⁸

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go. My young master doth
 expect your reproach.⁷

Shy. So do I his. 20

Laun. And they have conspir'd together. I will

¹ Find the meaning of *gormandise* in your dictionary.

² Imitate Launcelot's call to Jessica.

³ *Your worship* is equivalent to *your honor*, a phrase of respect still used in the court-room in addressing a judge.

⁴ From where? The *inner stage*, or curtained recess at the rear of the platform, usually represented the inside of a house. See the drawing on p. xxv.

⁵ Why does Shylock give his keys to Jessica? Remember what use she makes of them later.

⁶ *To-night* means *last night*. In what state of mind does Shylock seem to be?

⁷ The clown's variation for what word? Evidently Shylock takes him literally in replying.

not say you shall see a masque; but if you do,
 then it was not for nothing that my nose fell
 a-bleeding on Black-Monday^o last at six o'clock
 i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-
 Wednesday^o was four year in the afternoon.¹

Shy. What, are there masques?^o Hear you me, Jessica:
 Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum,
 And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,²
 Clamber not you up to the casements then, 30
 Nor thrust your head into the public street
 To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces;
 But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements.
 Let not the sound of shallow foppery^o enter
 My sober house. By Jacob's staff,^o I swear
 I have no mind of feasting forth to-night;
 But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;
 Say I will come.

Laun. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at win-
 dow³ for all this;

There will come a Christian by 40
 Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [*Exit.*]

Shy. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring,^o ha?

Jes. His words were "Farewell, mistress"; nothing else.

Shy. The patch⁴ is kind enough, but a huge feeder;

Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day

More than the wild-cat. Drones^o hive not with me;

Therefore I part with him, and part with him

¹ Sentence construction is nothing to Launcelot. Perhaps he wasn't so clever as he thought himself after all, but a true son of his father.

² Look up *wry* as an adjective, and try to determine whether it applies to *neck*, or to *fife*.

³ What part of the Elizabethan stage represented the case-ment windows of Shylock's house? See the drawing on p. xxv.

⁴ What does this word indicate with regard to Launcelot's costume?

To one that I would have him help to waste
 His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in.
 Perhaps I will return immediately. 50
 Do as I bid you; shut doors¹ after you;
 Fast bind, fast find,
 A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [Exit.
Jes. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost
 I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [Exit.²

[SCENE VI³]

Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masked.

Gra. This is the pent-house⁴ under which Lorenzo
 Desired us to make stand.
Salar. His hour is almost past.
Gra. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,⁵
 For lovers ever run before the clock.
Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons^o fly
 To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont^o
 To keep obligèd faith^o unforfeited!
Gra. That ever holds.⁶ Who riseth from a feast
 With that keen appetite that he sits down?
 Where is the horse that doth untread again 10
 His tedious measures^o with the unbated fire^o
 That he did pace them first? All things that are,

¹ What doors will Jessica shut in obeying her father's command?

² Where does Shylock go out? Where Jessica?

³ Has the place changed? How much later is this scene supposed to be? See lines 34 and 63.

⁴ Look up *pent-house* in your dictionary. What structure represented the pent-house on Shakespeare's stage?

⁵ Explain the phrase, "out-dwells his hour."

⁶ That's always true.

Are with more spirit chasèd¹ than enjoy'd.
 How like a younker^o or a prodigal
 The scarfèd^o bark² puts from her native bay,
 Hugg'd and embracèd by the strumpet wind!
 How like the prodigal^o doth she return,
 With over-weather'd ribs³ and ragged sails,
 Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind!
Salat. Here comes Lorenzo. More of this hereafter. 20

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;⁴
 Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait.
 When you shall please to play the thieves for wives
 I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
 Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA, above,⁵ in boy's clothes.

Jes. Who are you? Tell me for more certainty,
 Albeit^o I'll swear that I do know your tongue.
Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.
Jes. Lorenzo, certain; and my love indeed,
 For who⁶ love I so much? And now who knows 30
 But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?
Lor. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

¹ How many syllables in the word *chased* as Shakespeare intended it to be pronounced? Count the number of syllables in the line.

² *Bark*, of course, means *boat*. Are you looking up all the words marked (°) in the notes at the end of the book?

³ What are the *ribs* of a boat?

⁴ What must the word *abode* mean?

⁵ What represented *above* on Shakespeare's stage?

⁶ *Who* for *whom*. See *Shakespeare's Grammar*, p. 114.

Jes. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.

I am glad 'tis night,¹ you do not look on me,
 For I am much asham'd of my exchange.
 But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
 The pretty follies that themselves commit;
 For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
 To see me thus transformèd² to a boy.

Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer. 40

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?

They in themselves, good sooth, are too too
 light.³

Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
 And I should be obscur'd.^o

Lor. So are you, sweet,

Even in the lovely garnish⁴ of a boy.

But come at once;

For the close night^o doth play the runaway,

And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself

With some more ducats, and be with you straight. 50

[*Exit above.*]

Gra. Now, by my hood,^o a Gentile, and no Jew.

Lor. Beshrew me^o but I love her heartily;

For she is wise, if I can judge of her;

And fair she is, if that^o mine eyes be true;

And true she is, as she hath prov'd herself;

And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,

Shall she be placèd⁵ in my constant soul.

¹ How could they indicate night on a day-lighted stage?

² How many syllables in *transformed*?

³ Nowadays we should say *much too light*. *Light* here is a pun, the second meaning being *frivolous, blameworthy*.

⁴ What must the word *garnish* mean?

⁵ *Placed* is equivalent to *held*. How many syllables must be pronounced?

Enter JESSICA, below.

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

[Exit with JESSICA and SALARINO.]

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. Who's there? 60

Gra. Signior Antonio!

Ant. Fie, fie, Gratiano; where are all the rest?

'Tis nine o'clock; our friends all stay for you.

No masque to-night;¹ the wind is come about;

Bassanio presently² will go aboard.

I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gra. I am glad on't. I desire no more delight

Than to be under sail and gone to-night.³ *[Exeunt.]*

[SCENE VII]

[Belmont. The hall of PORTIA's house.]

*Flourish of cornets.*⁴ *Enter PORTIA, with the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, and their trains.*

Por. Go draw aside the curtains⁵ and discover

¹ That is, no masque for us. The wind is now blowing in the direction of Belmont, where Bassanio is going.

² What is the old meaning of *presently*? See note 1, p. 9.

³ This interruption by Antonio serves two useful purposes: it recalls us to the main thread of the story, Bassanio's wooing of Portia, and it also warns the audience not to expect the lively scenes of a Venetian masque, which would throw the story off center, so to speak, and unnecessarily delay the action.

⁴ What is the meaning of the word *Flourish*?

⁵ What curtains? See the drawing of the Globe theater stage on p. xxv.

The several caskets to this noble prince.

Now make your choice.

Mor. The first, of gold, who^o this inscription bears:

"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;"

The second, silver, which this promise carries:

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;"

This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt:

"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."

How shall I know if I do choose the right? 10

Por. The one of them contains my picture, prince;

If you choose that, then I am yours withal.^o

Mor. Some god direct my judgment! Let me see.

I will survey the inscriptions back again.

What says this leaden casket?

"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."

Must give,—for what? for lead? hazard for lead?

This casket threatens. Men that hazard all

Do it in hope of fair advantages;

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross.¹ 20

I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

What says the silver with her virgin hue?

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."

As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,

And weigh thy value with an even hand.

If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,

Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough

May not extend so far as to the lady;

¹ You should know the exact meaning of this word.

And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.^o 30
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady!
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces and in qualities of breeding;¹
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying grav'd in gold:
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men de-
sire."

Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.^o 40
The Hyrcanian deserts^o and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares^o now
For princes to come view fair Portia.
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits;² but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere dam-
nation

To think so base a thought. It³ were too gross 50
To rib her cerecloth^o in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immur'd,⁴
Being ten times undervalu'd to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in
England

¹ Evidently an excessive modesty is not one of the faults of Morocco.

² What is the word *sprits* equivalent to in this line?

³ That is, lead.

⁴ Look up *immur'd* in the dictionary.

A coin that bears the figure of an angel
 Stampèd in gold,^o but that's insculp'd¹ upon;
 But here an angel in a golden bed
 Lies all within. Deliver me the key.

Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!² 60

Por. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,
 Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden casket.*

Mor. Oh hell! what have we here?

A carrion Death,^o within whose empty eye
 There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[*Reads.*] "All that glisters^o is not gold;
 Often have you heard that told.
 Many a man his life hath sold
 But my outside to behold.
 Gilded tombs do worms infold.
 Had you been as wise as bold, 70
 Young in limbs, in judgment old,
 Your answer had not been inscroll'd.³
 Fare you well; your suit is cold."

Cold, indeed, and labour lost;
 Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
 Portia, adieu. I have too griev'd a heart }
 To take a tedious leave. Thus losers part.⁴

[*Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets.*

Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
 Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt.*

¹ *Insculp'd* means *engraved, written upon*.

² Do you think this speech might grow tiresome on the stage?
 Is there anything in the situation to offset its length?

³ Portia's picture would have been in the casket, and therefore
 no need of the written scroll.

⁴ What commendable traits do you find in the Prince of
 Morocco?

[SCENE VIII]

[*Venice. A street.*]¹*Enter* SALARINO and SALANIO.*Salar.* Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail;

With him is Gratiano gone along;

And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

Salan. The villain Jew with outcries rais'd the Duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.*Salar.* He came too late, the ship was under sail;

But there the Duke was given to understand

That in a gondola were seen together

Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica.

Besides, Antonio certified the Duke

10

They were not with Bassanio in his ship.²*Salan.* I never heard a passion^o so confus'd,

So strange, outrageous, and so variable,

As the dog Jew³ did utter in the streets:

"My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!

Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!

Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!

A sealèd bag, two sealèd bags of ducats,

Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!

¹ This scene may be presumed to have taken place the next day, as there is no further mention of the night-time of Scene VI. It is therefore the second day in the time-analysis. Observe the frequent time-hints in the scenes that follow.

² This dialog is necessary in order to clear Bassanio and Antonio of any complicity in Jessica's theft of her father's jewels.

³ Shakespeare unquestionably shared in the general dislike of Jews. But that he saw another side to the case than that expressed here by Salanio appears in his treatment of Shylock as the play unfolds.

SCENE VIII.] The Merchant of Venice 47

And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious
stones, 20

Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl!
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats!"

Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Salar. Marry, well remember'd.

I reason'd° with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarrièd°
A vessel of our country richly fraught.¹ 30
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

Salan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part.
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return; he answer'd, "Do not so;
Slubber° not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay² the very riping of the time; 40
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love.
Be merry; and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents³ of love
As shall conveniently become you there."
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,

¹ Look up the early meaning of *fraught*. In *Webster's* dictionary the older meanings are given first; while in the *Standard* and the *Century* the contrary is the case.

² *Stay* is equivalent to *await*. Frequently so.

³ What is the meaning of *ostent* here?

And with affection wondrous sensible^o

He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

Salan. I think he only loves the world for him. 50

I pray thee, let us go and find him out,

And quicken his embracèd heaviness^o

With some delight or other.

Salar. Do we so. [*Exeunt.*¹

[SCENE IX]

[*Belmont. PORTIA'S house.*]

Enter NERISSA and a SERVITOR.^o

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight;^o

¹ Nothing of importance to the story seems to have happened in this scene. It is therefore in order to inquire why Shakespeare wrote it, and why it cannot be omitted from a modern presentation of the play.

In the first place something is needed to separate the casket-choosing of Morocco from that of Arragon. Played as consecutive scenes they would lose rather than gain in interest to the beholder. But it is even more necessary to the structure of the play that Antonio's ventures shall all miscarry, and the Merchant fall into the toils of the Jew. Such a reversal of fortune, to be credible, cannot be thrust upon us all at once; it must be approached, first by the devious path of rumor, then by repeated announcement of disaster to one vessel after another, and finally by the confirmation of Antonio himself. This scene gives us the illusion of passing time, affords a little crude humor for the thoughtless majority in every audience, and provides an essential foretaste of impending disaster.

Incidentally it bears witness to the affection existing between Antonio and Bassanio, thus warming our hearts toward the melancholy-unfortunate Merchant of Venice. One of the chief duties of the dramatist is to make his audience like the hero, and hitherto we have had only Antonio's generosity to commend him.

The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election¹ presently.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON,
PORTIA, and their trains.*

Por. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince.
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,
Straight shall our nuptial rites² be solemniz'd;
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.

Ar. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one 10
Which casket 'twas I chose;³ next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage;
Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

Por. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Ar. And so have I address'd me.^o Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold, silver, and base lead. 20
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he
hath."

You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men de-
sire."

What many men desire! that "many" may be meant

¹ Find an appropriate meaning for the word *election*.

² *Nuptial rites* means *marriage ceremony*.

³ Why is this condition necessary to a proper interest in the play?

By the fool multitude¹ that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond^o eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the
martlet,^o

Builds in the weather² on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.³ 30

I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump^o with common spirits,
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.⁴
Why then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he
deserves."

And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen^o fortune, and be honourable⁵
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeservèd dignity. 40

O, that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour
Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover^o that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry^o would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honour!⁶ and how much
honour

Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times

¹ Read the word *by* in the line above,—“By that ‘many’ may be meant the fool multitude.”

² Exposed to the weather.

³ Are you sure you know the meaning of this word? Modern newspaper usage is misleading.

‘What are the outstanding characteristics of the Prince of Arragon?’

⁵ Win honors.

“How many noble-born gentlemen would be reduced to the rank of peasantry.”

To be new varnish'd!¹ Well, but to my choice.

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
50

I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,²
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket.*]

Por. [*Aside.*] Too long a pause for that which you find there.³

Ar. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule!⁴ I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
"Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves."

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?

Is that my prize? are my deserts no better? 60

Por. To offend and judge are distinct offices,
And of opposèd natures.⁴

Ar. What is here?

[*Reads.*] "The fire⁵ seven times tried this.⁶

Seven times tried that judgment is

That did never choose amiss.

Some there be that shadows kiss;

Such have but a shadow's bliss.

There be fools alive, I wis,⁶

Silver'd o'er; and so was this.⁷

¹ "And how many noblemen created out of the so-called inferior classes,—the *chaff and ruin of the times.*"

² What action accompanies line 51?

³ Does Portia know which of the caskets contains her picture?

⁴ This is Portia's polite way of saying that the offender, Arragon, cannot be the best judge of his own offense, meaning his own merits.

⁵ Fire is here a two-syllable word.

⁶ This metal.

⁷ This what?

Take what wife you will to bed,¹ 70
I will ever be your head;²
So be gone; you are sped."³

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here.
With one fool's head I came to woo
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.⁴

[*Exeunt ARRAGON and train.*]

Por. Thus hath the candle sing'd the moth.

O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose 80
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy,⁵

Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Where is my lady?

Por. Here; what would my lord?⁶

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate

A young Venetian, one that comes before

¹ This would seem to contradict Portia's injunction with respect to Arragon's asking another lady in marriage. Perhaps the best explanation is that the conditions were mainly imposed by herself to frighten off undesirable suitors such as those who had already taken their leave.

² *I*, of course, is the fool's head, a delicate allusion to Arragon's bad judgment.

³ What must the word *sped* mean?

⁴ *Wroth* is the same word etymologically as *wrath*.

⁵ Portia's good humor over the failure of Arragon is shown in this playful mockery of her servant. What do we now know with respect to the right casket?

To signify the approaching of his lord;
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets,^o
To wit,^o besides commends^o and courteous breath,¹
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen 91
So likely an ambassador of love.

A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer^o was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Por. No more, I pray thee. I am half afeard^o
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day² wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post^o that comes so mannerly. 100
Ner. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!³ [*Exeunt.*]

[ACT THIRD]

[SCENE I]

[*Venice. The street before SHYLOCK'S house.*]

*Enter SALANIO and SALARINO.*⁴

Salan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it⁵ lives there uncheck'd that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wreck'd on the narrow seas,—the Goodwins,^o I think they call the place,—a very dangerous flat and fatal,

¹ *Courteous breath* must mean what?

² Holiday wit,—extravagant terms.

³ "Let Bassanio win, O Cupid, if it be thy will." Why is Nerissa so much interested in the success of Bassanio?

⁴ Probably from opposite sides of the stage.

⁵ The rumor persists. This scene is several days or weeks later, but we shall have to call it the *third day* of the play.

where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip¹ Report be an honest woman of her word.

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapp'd ginger,² or made her neighbours 10 believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity,³ or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio,—O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—

Salar. Come, the full stop.

Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses. 20

Salan. Let me say "amen"³ betimes,³ lest the devil cross my prayer; for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter SHYLOCK.

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shy. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salar. That's certain. I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

Salan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the 30

¹ A *gossip* is a talkative old lady.

² *Knapp'd* means *nibbled*, *broke off by biting*. That ginger was a favorite root among old women may be inferred from a passage in *Measure For Measure*: "Ginger was not much in request, for all the old women were dead."

³ Look up the meaning of *betimes*.

bird was fledg'd; and then it is the complexion^o
of them all to leave the dam.¹

Shy. She is damn'd for it.

Salar. That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel! . . .

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh
and hers than between jet and ivory; more be-
tween your bloods than there is between red
wine and rhenish.^o But tell us, do you hear
whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no? 40

Shy. There I have another bad match; a bank-
rupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head
on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come
so smug² upon the mart. Let him look to his
bond; he was wont³ to call me usurer; let him
look to his bond; he was wont to lend money
for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his
bond!

Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not
take his flesh. What's that good for? 50

Shy. To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing
else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgrac'd
me, and hinder'd me half a million;⁴ laugh'd at
my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorn'd my na-
tion, thwarted my bargains, cool'd my friends,
heated mine enemies; and what's his reason?
I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a
Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affec-
tions, passions? fed with the same food, hurt
with the same weapons, subject to the same 60

¹ The *dam* is the female parent, corresponding to the male *sire*.

² Find the meaning of *smug* (adjective). *Mart* means *market*.

³ Do you know the meaning of *wont* as an adjective?

⁴ Half a million what?

diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian what is his humility?¹ Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew what should his sufferance^o be by Christian example? Why, revenge. 70
The villainy you teach me I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.²

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house,³ and desires to speak with you both.

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter TUBAL.

Salan. Here comes another of the tribe; a third cannot be match'd unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt SALAN., SALAR., and SERVANT.*]

Shy. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa?

Hast thou found my daughter?

Tub. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her. 80

¹ *Humility* is ironical.

² One of the "big" speeches of the play. Try reading it aloud to secure the greatest effect.

³ This provides an excuse for Salanio and Salarino to leave the stage in order to make room for the dialog of Shylock and Tubal. An important character may enter, but may not leave the stage without assigning some reason for his departure.

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone,—cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hears'd¹ at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so;—and I know 90 not what's spent in the search. Why, thou loss upon loss! The thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge; nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.²

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too. Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,—

Shy. What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck? ³

Tub. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.⁴ 100

Shy. I thank God, I thank God! Is't true, is't true?

Tub. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

Shy. I thank thee, good Tubal; good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa?⁵

Tub. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

¹ Find the older meaning of the noun *hearse* from which the verb *hears'd* is made.

² Shylock is now in a dangerous mood. What reason has the dramatist provided to make him more than ever malevolent toward Antonio?

³ Should this line be spoken rapidly or slowly? Try it both ways.

⁴ Is this the argosy mentioned in line 3 of this scene?

⁵ Evidently Tubal has just come from Genoa.

Shy. Thou stick'st a dagger in me; I shall never see my gold again. Fourscore ducats at a sitting! 110
Fourscore ducats!

Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.^o

Shy. I am very glad of it. I'll plague him; I'll torture him! I am glad of it.

Tub. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.¹

Shy. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal. It was my turquoise;² I had it of Leah when I was 120
a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.³

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before.⁴ I will have the heart of him if he forfeit; for were he out of Venice I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue. Go, good Tubal; at our synagogue,^o Tubal. [Exeunt. 130

¹ Is Tubal playing with Shylock's feelings, or is he simply muddle-headed? Whatever the cause, Shylock's mixed emotions provide a richly humorous scene.

² If you do not know what a *turquoise* is look the word up in your dictionary. Perhaps a colored plate of gems is given in the Appendix. The supposition was that this stone changed color when the giver proved faithless.

³ What does *undone* mean?

⁴ Before Antonio's bond is due? Antonio is clearly the most important wholesale merchant in Venice.

[SCENE II]

[Belmont. PORTIA'S house.]

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, and
ATTENDANTS.

Por. I pray you, tarry. Pause a day or two
Before you hazard;¹ for in choosing wrong
I lose your company; therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me—but it is not love—
I would not lose you; and you know yourself
Hate counsels not in such a quality.^o
But lest you should not understand me well,—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,—²
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you 10
How to choose right,³ but I am then forsworn.
So will I never be; so may you miss me;
But if you do you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,⁴
They have o'er-look'd me, and divided me;
One-half of me is yours, the other half yours,—
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours! O, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so, 20

¹ Bassanio has apparently visited in Belmont long enough to be on terms of friendship with Portia. Before the scene is over we find that the three months Antonio's bond had to run are supposed to have now elapsed, but it is still, strictly speaking, only the *fourth day of the play*.

² "A maiden should never speak her mind in these matters."

³ Does Portia now know the right casket?

⁴ A gentle oath, indeed. "Plague take your eyes."

Fading in music. That the comparison
 May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
 And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
 And what is music then? Then music is
 Even as the flourish¹ when true subjects bow
 To a new-crownèd monarch; such it is 50
 As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
 That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
 And summon him to marriage.^o Now he goes,²
 With no less presence but with much more love
 Than young Alcides,^o when he did redeem
 The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
 To the sea-monster. I stand for sacrifice;^o
 The rest aloof³ are the Dardanian wives,^o
 With blearèd visages,⁴ come forth to view
 The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules! 60
 Live thou, I live. With much much⁵ more dismay
 I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray.

Music, whilst BASSANIO comments on the caskets to himself.

SONG.⁶

Tell me where is fancy⁷ bred,
 Or in the heart or in the head?

¹ Do you recall the meaning of *flourish*? It has occurred at the beginning of several scenes, just before the entrance of a prince or other personage of importance. See Act II, Scene I; Act II, Scene VII; and Act II, Scene IX.

² Who goes, and where?

³ The other attendants present.

⁴ *Visages* mean *faces*. *Bleare*d from what?

⁵ Another example of the repetition of an adverb for emphasis. Compare the *too too* of Act II, Scene VI, line 42.

⁶ Who sings this song? Shakespeare provided nearly all of his plays with incidental music, a sure indication that there was at least one good singer in the company.

⁷ *Fancy* means what? Certainly not *imagination*.

How begot, how nourishèd?¹

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd² in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell;³ 70

I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves;⁴

The world is still⁵ deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd^o with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damnèd error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament? 80
There is no vice so simple^o but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his^o outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;⁶
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as
milk;⁷
And these assume but valour's excrement^o

¹ How many syllables in *nourished*? Pronounce them all in reading.

² *Engender'd* means *created*. Compare the *bred* of the first line of the song, which must have about the same meaning.

³ Look up this word.

⁴ The point of the song seems to be that the love which takes its origin in the eyes, that is, the outward appearance, comes to early grief. Does this provide Bassanio with a hint?

⁵ What is the usual Shakespearean meaning of the word *still*?

⁶ What was Hercules noted for? Mars?

⁷ The liver was supposed to be the seat of cowardice.

To render them redoubted!¹ Look on beauty,
 And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;^o
 Which therein works a miracle in nature, 90
 Making them lightest² that wear most of it.
 So are those crispèd^o snaky golden locks
 Which make such wanton gambols³ with the wind
 Upon supposèd fairness, often known
 To be the dowry of a second head,⁴
 The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
 Thus ornament is but the guilèd^o shore
 To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
 Veiling an Indian beauty;⁵ in a word,
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on 100
 To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
 Hard food for Midas,⁶ I will none of thee;
 Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge^o
 'Tween man and man. But thou, thou meagre
 lead,
 Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
 Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
 And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

Por. [*Aside.*] How all the other passions fleet to air,

¹ Another word to be looked up. If you use the dictionary faithfully it will increase your power and understanding a hundredfold more than the mere reading of notes prepared by the editor.

² What two meanings of *light* are intended?

³ Look up *gambol* as a noun.

⁴ In other words, the famous beauty is wearing *false hair*.

⁵ *Indian* is used in the sense of *savage*, *hideous*. Shakespeare probably drew his impressions of Indian female beauty from Montaigne, who says (Florio's translation), "The Indians describe it [beauty] black and swarthy, with blabbered thick lips, with a broad and flat nose."

⁶ What was the story of Midas? If you have not read it in Hawthorne's *Wonder Book* a brief reference may be found under *Midas* in the dictionary.

As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embrac'd despair,
 And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy! 110
 O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
 In measure rein thy joy; scant° this excess!
 I feel too much thy blessing; make it less,
 For fear I surfeit!¹

Bass.

What find I here?

[Opening the leaden casket.]

Fair Portia's counterfeit!² What demi-god°
 Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
 Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
 Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
 Parted with sugar breath. So sweet a bar
 Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
 The painter plays the spider, and hath woven 121
 A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men³
 Faster than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes,—
 How could he see to do them? Having made one,
 Methinks it should have power to steal both his
 And leave itself unfurnish'd.° Yet look, how far
 The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
 In underprizing it, so far this shadow
 Doth limp behind the substance.° Here's the scroll,
 The continent° and summary of¹ my fortune. 130

[Reads.] "You that choose not by the view,
 Chance as fair,⁴ and choose as true!
 Since this fortune falls to you,
 Be content and seek no new.
 If you be well pleas'd with this,

¹ Look up the meaning of *surfeit*. What state of mind is Portia in now?

² That is, her picture.

³ What figure of speech?

⁴ May you succeed as well in other ventures.

And hold your fortune for your bliss,^o
Turn you where your lady is,
And claim her with a loving kiss."

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave.¹
I come by note, to give and to receive.^o 140
Like one of two contending in a prize,²
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no;
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so;
As doubtful whether what I see be true
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am. Though for myself alone 150
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
more rich;
That^o only to stand high in your account
I might in virtues, beauties, livings,³ friends,
Exceed account. But the full sum of me
Is sum of something,^o which, to term in gross,^o
Is an unlesson'd girl,⁴ unschool'd, unpractisèd;
Happy in this,—she is not yet so old 160
But she may learn; happier than this,—
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;

¹ What action accompanies this line?

² This formal comparison between himself and a wrestler or runner contending for a prize is an example of *simile*.

³ Find an appropriate meaning for the noun *living*.

⁴ In the next act Portia proves to have learning enough to play the scholar and lawyer; so this statement seems rather modest.

Happiest of all! in that her gentle spirit
 Commits itself to yours to be directed,
 As from her lord, her governor, her king.
 Myself and what is mine to you and yours
 Is now converted. But now I was the lord
 Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
 Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
 This house, these servants, and this same myself, 170
 Are yours, my lord. I give them with this ring;
 Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
 Let it presage¹ the ruin of your love,
 And be my vantage to exclaim on you.°

Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words.
 Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
 And there is such confusion in my powers,
 As, after some oration fairly spoke²
 By a belovèd prince, there doth appear
 Among the buzzing pleasèd multitude; 180
 Where every something, being blent together,
 Turns to a wild of nothing save of joy,
 Express'd and not express'd.° But when this ring
 Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence.
 O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

Ner. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
 That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
 To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!

Gra. My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
 I wish you all the joy that you can wish; 190
 For I am sure you can wish none from me.°
 And when your honours° mean to solemnize
 The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you
 Even at that time I may be married too.

¹ Find the meaning of *presage*.

² *Spoke* for *spoken*. Why?

Bass. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.¹

My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours.

You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;

You lov'd, I lov'd for intermission.²

No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.³ 200

Your fortune stood upon the casket there,

And so did mine too, as the matter falls;

For, wooing here until I sweat again,

And swearing till my very roof was dry

With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,⁴

I got a promise of this fair one here.

To have her love, provided that your fortune

Achieved her mistress.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa?

Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith? 210

Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

Gra. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?⁵

What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA,⁵ *and* SALERIO, *a messenger from Venice.*

Bass. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;

If that the youth of my new interest here⁶

¹ Nerissa's interest in Bassanio's choice is now clear.

² During the intermissions in your love-making.

³ I owe my wife as much to you as to myself.

⁴ Whose promise?

⁵ Why do Lorenzo and Jessica go to Belmont? What stage reason is there for their being present in the later scenes of the play?

⁶ Paraphrase this line in your note-book.

Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

Por. So do I, my lord;
They are entirely welcome. 220

Lor. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did entreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

Saler. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him¹ to you. [*Gives BASSANIO a letter.*]

Bass. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.
Saler. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind. His letter there 230
Will show you his estate.

[*BASSANIO opens the letter.*]

Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.²
Your hand, Salerio. What's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success.
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.³

Saler. I would you had won the fleece that he hath
lost.³

Por. There are some shrewd^o contents in yon same
paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek,—
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world 240

¹ Why not *himself*?

² What is now the relative position of the seven persons on the stage? Make a diagram.

³ Referring to what?

Could turn so much the constitution
 Of any constant^o man. What, worse and worse!
 With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,
 And I must freely have the half of anything
 That this same paper brings you.

Bass. O sweet Portia,

Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
 That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
 When I did first impart my love to you,
 I freely told you all the wealth I had
 Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman; 250
 And then I told you true; and yet, dear lady,
 Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
 How much I was a braggart. When I told you
 My state^o was nothing I should then have told
 you

That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,
 I have engag'd myself to a dear friend,
 Engag'd my friend to his mere^o enemy,
 To feed my means.¹ Here is a letter, lady;
 The paper as the body of my friend,
 And every word in it a gaping wound, 260
 Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?
 Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one
 hit?

From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
 From Lisbon, Barbary, and India?
 And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
 Of merchant-marring² rocks?

Saler. Not one, my lord.

Besides, it should appear that if he had
 The present money to discharge the Jew,

¹ Explain the meaning of this phrase.

² How could the rocks *mar* merchants?

He would not take it. Never did I know
 A creature that did bear the shape of man 270
 So keen and greedy to confound¹ a man.
 He plies the Duke at morning and at night;
 And doth impeach the freedom of the state,²
 If they deny him justice. Twenty merchants,
 The Duke himself, and the magnificoes
 Of greatest port,³ have all persuaded with him;
 But none can drive him from the envious³
 plea

Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

Jes. When I was with him I have heard him swear
 To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen, 280
 That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
 Than twenty times the value of the sum
 That he did owe him; and I know, my lord,
 If law, authority, and power deny not,
 It will go hard with poor Antonio.

Por. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
 The best-condition'd⁴ and unwearied spirit⁴
 In doing courtesies; and one in whom
 The ancient Roman honour more appears 290
 Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Por. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bass. For me three thousand ducats.

Por. What, no more?
 Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
 Double six thousand, and then treble that,
 Before a friend of this description

¹ Find the older meaning of *confound*.

² Look up *magnifico* and *port*. (Both nouns.)

³ *Envy* in Shakespeare frequently means *hate*.

⁴ And *most* unwearied spirit. What must *spirit* mean here?

Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side 300
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty¹ debt twenty times over.
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day.
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer;^o
Since you are dear bought,² I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [*Reads.*] "Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all 310
miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate
is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and
since in paying it it is impossible I should live,
all debts are cleared between you and I³ if I
might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding,
use your pleasure. If your love do not persuade
you to come let not my letter."

Por. O love, dispatch all business and be gone!

Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away
I will make haste; but, till I come again 320
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. [*Exeunt.*]

¹ Are you sure of the meaning of *petty*?

² Bassanio is *dear bought* indeed, to cost his wife so much upon their wedding-day. Portia's sense of humor is one of her most charming characteristics.

³ Is this grammatical? Writers in Shakespeare's day took liberties with the language which are denied us, now that the grammar of English has in large measure been determined.

[SCENE III]

[*Venice. A street.*]

Enter SHYLOCK,¹ SALARINO, ANTONIO, and a JAILER.

Shy. Jailer, look to him; tell not me of mercy.

This is the fool that lent out money gratis.²

Jailer, look to him.

Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond.

I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.

Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;³

But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.⁴

The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,

Thou naughty^o jailer, that thou art so fond⁵

To come abroad with him at his request. 10

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.

Shy. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak.

I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.

I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,

To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield

To Christian intercessors.⁶ Follow not;

¹ How does the audience know that the scene has been changed to Venice? Remember that there was no scenery of the modern kind to aid in the illusion of place, and no playbill to glance at at the outset of act or scene.

² *Gratis* means what?

³ Was this true? Look up Act I, Scene III.

⁴ What is the meaning of *fangs*?

⁵ What was the usual meaning of *fond* in Shakespeare's day?

⁶ It has now become a matter of personal pride with Shylock not to relent.

I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond. [*Exit.*
Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
 That ever kept with^o men.

Ant. Let him alone;
 I'll follow him no more with bootless¹ prayers. 20
 He seeks my life; his reason well I know.
 I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
 Many that have at times made moan² to me;
 Therefore he hates me.

Salar. I am sure the Duke
 Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

Ant. The Duke cannot deny the course of law;
 For the commodity³ that strangers have
 With us in Venice, if it be denied,
 Will much impeach⁴ the justice of his state,
 Since that⁵ the trade and profit of the city 30
 Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go.
 These griefs and losses have so bated⁶ me
 That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
 To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
 Well, jailer, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
 To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

[*Exeunt.*

¹ *Bootless* means without *boot*, not without *boots*. Look up the old meaning of *boot* as a noun, and compare the modern phrase, "I'll give so much *to boot*."

² What is the meaning of *made moan*?

³ Because of the commerce. What is the antecedent of *it*?

⁴ Look up *impeach*, and compare with line 273 of Scene II.

⁵ The word *that* has no meaning in this line. See *Shakespeare's Grammar*, page 115.

⁶ Find an appropriate meaning for *bated* as a transitive verb.

[SCENE IV]

[*Belmont. PORTIA'S house.*]

*Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, and BALTHASAR, a servant.*¹

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit^o
Of god-like amity;^o which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.²
But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover³ of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.⁴

Por. I never did repent for doing good, 10
Nor shall not now; for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs^o a like proportion^o
Of lineaments,^o of manners and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestow'd
In purchasing the semblance of my soul⁵ 20

¹ What does the audience know of the change of scene when these characters enter?

² How much time is supposed to have elapsed since the last scene at Belmont? What day of the play is this?

³ Find the old meaning of *lover*.

⁴ I know you would be prouder of your act than such generosity would ordinarily make you.

⁵ The man who most resembles Bassanio.

From out the state of hellish misery!
This comes too near the praising of myself;
Therefore no more of it. Hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry¹ and manage² of my house
Until my lord's return. For mine own part,
I have toward heaven breath'd a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return. 30
There is a monastery³ two miles off;
And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition;⁴
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

Lor. Madam, with all my heart;
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

Por. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge³ you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
And so farewell till we shall meet again. 40

Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleas'd
To wish it back on you. Fare you well, Jessica.

[*Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO.*⁴

Now, Balthasar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua. See thou render this

¹ Look up *husbandry*.

² Why not *management*?

³ Obey the commands of you and Jessica.

⁴ Why do Lorenzo and Jessica leave the stage?

Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario; 50
 And look what notes and garments he doth give thee,
 Bring them, I pray thee, with imagin'd speed
 Unto the tranect,^o to the common ferry
 Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
 But get thee gone. I shall be there before thee.

Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed. [Exit.

Por. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
 That you yet know not of; we'll see our husbands
 Before they think of us.

Ner. Shall they see us?

Por. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit¹ 60
 That they shall think we are accomplished
 With that we lack.² I'll hold thee any wager,
 When we are both accoutred^o like young men,
 I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
 And wear my dagger with a braver grace,
 And speak between the change of man and boy
 With a reed voice,^o and turn two mincing steps³
 Into a manly stride, and speak of frays^o
 Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
 How honourable ladies sought my love, 70
 Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
 I could not do withal.⁴ Then I'll repent,
 And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;
 And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
 That^o men shall swear I have discontinued school⁵
 Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
 A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,^o
 Which I will practise.

¹ Find an appropriate meaning for *habit*.

² That is, they shall think we are men.

³ *Mincing* must mean what?

⁴ I could not help it.

⁵ Supply the word *not*.

Ner. Why, shall we turn to men?

Por. Fie, what a question's that! . . .

But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device° 80

When I am in my coach, which stays¹ for us

At the park-gate; and therefore haste away,

For we must measure twenty miles to-day.

[*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE V]

Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA.

Laun. Yes, truly;² for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children; therefore, I promise ye, I fear you.° I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation³ of the matter. Therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damn'd. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good. . . .

Jes. And what hope is that, I pray thee?

Laun. Marry, you may partly hope that you are not the Jew's daughter. 10

Jes. So the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

Laun. Truly then I fear you are damn'd both by father and mother; thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis,° your mother. Well, you are gone⁴ both ways.

Jes. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

¹ What word is meant?

² Launcelot's opening remark is intended to show that the pair have been in conversation for some time.

³ Launcelot probably means *cogitation, thought*. "I speak my mind on the matter."

⁴ *Gone* is equivalent to what?

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he; we were Christians enow^o before, e'en as many as could 20 well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs. If we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher¹ on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO.

Jes. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say. Here he comes.²

Lor. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

Jes. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo; Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly there is 30 no mercy for me in heaven because I am a Jew's daughter; and he says you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians you raise the price of pork. . . .

Lor. I think the best grace of wit^o will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.³ 40

Lor. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! Then bid them prepare dinner.

Laun. That is done too, sir; only "cover" is the word.

¹ What is a *rasher* of bacon?

² We can imagine the start Launcelot gets at this announcement. What must be the relative position of Launcelot and Jessica on the stage so that Jessica sees Lorenzo first?

³ A pun is intended, *stomach* meaning *appetite* as well as the organ of digestion.

Lor. Will you cover, then, sir?

Laun. Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.¹

Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion!² Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows, bid them 50
cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Laun. For the table, sir, it shall be served in; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered;³ for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits^o shall govern. [Exit.

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!⁴
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools that stand in better place, 60
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word
Defy the matter.⁵ How farest thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,—
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

Jes. Past all expressing. It is very meet⁶
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
And if on earth he do not mean it,^o then
In reason he should never come to heaven. 70

¹ The clown quibbles on the two meanings of the word *cover*, meaning to wear one's hat, and also to set the table. He would not *cover* in the presence of his betters.

² What must this phrase mean?

³ Of course the clown gets the orders mixed.

⁴ "Dear me, how he can pun!"

⁵ "I know a number of court jesters dressed as oddly as he, who in order to make a pun twist the whole meaning of what you are saying."

⁶ Look up the meaning of *meet* as an adjective.

Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
 And on the wager lay two earthly women,
 And Portia one, there must be something else
 Pawn'd^o with the other; for the poor rude world
 Hath not her fellow.

Lor. Even such a husband

Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.¹

Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

Lor. I will anon. First, let us go to dinner.

Jes. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.²

Lor. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk; 80
 Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
 I shall digest^o it.

Jes. Well, I'll set you forth.³ [*Exeunt.*]

[ACT FOURTH]

[SCENE I]

[*Venice. A court of justice.*]⁴

*Enter the DUKE,⁵ the MAGNIFICOES,^o ANTONIO,
 BASSANIO, GRATIANO, [SALERIO, and others.]*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Ant. Ready, so please your Grace.

¹ Do you think Lorenzo is serious in this praise of himself?

² What does *stomach* imply here? Find the word in a large dictionary and choose an appropriate meaning.

³ "Well, I'll explain to you." What is the purpose of this scene? What has been accomplished by it?

⁴ How do you suppose the stage was set to play this court scene? What would the inner stage be used for? The upper stage, or balcony?

⁵ The Duke, or doge, of ancient Venice, was all powerful—the Czar of his day. Yet he is not represented as such in this scene. Why not? If the Duke were able to settle the matter himself what would become of Portia's part in the trial?

Duke. I am sorry for thee. Thou art come to answer

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch

~~Unceasing^o of pity, void and empty~~

~~From any dram of mercy.~~

Ant. I have heard

Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify¹

His rigorous course; [but since he stands obdurate,

And that no lawful means can carry me

Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose 10

My patience to his fury; and am arm'd

To suffer with a quietness of spirit

The very tyranny and rage of his.²]

Duke. Go, one, and call the Jew into the court.

Saler. He is ready at the door; he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK.

Duke. Make room,³ and let him stand before our face.

Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,

That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice

To the last hour of act;⁴ and then 'tis thought

Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more 20
strange^o

Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;

And where thou now exact'st the penalty,

Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,

Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,

¹ Suggest another word for *qualify*. What is the meaning of *rigorous*? *Obdurate*?

² His what? Find the old meaning of *envy*, (line 10).

³ *Make room* indicates what with regard to the number of persons on the stage?

⁴ To the point of actually cutting off the pound of flesh.

But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
 Forgive a moiety¹ of the principal;
 [Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
 That have of late so huddled on his back,
 Enow to press a royal merchant down,
 And pluck commiseration^o of his state 30
 From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
 From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
 To offices of tender courtesy.]

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose;
 And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
 To have the due and forfeit of my bond.
 If you deny it let the danger light
 Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
 You'll ask me why I rather choose to have 40
 A weight of carrion-flesh than to receive
 Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that,
 But say it is my humour.² Is it answer'd?
 What if my house be troubled with a rat,
 And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
 To have it baned?³ What, are you answer'd yet?
 Some men there are love not a gaping pig;^o
 Some that are mad if they behold a cat;
 [And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the
 nose; . . .

For affection,
 Master of passion, sways it to the mood 50
 Of what it likes or loathes.⁴] Now, for your answer:

¹ What is the meaning of *moiety*?

² It is my *whim*, or *fancy*.

³ What is the old meaning of *bane* (transitive verb)?

⁴ In other words, we are ruled by our desires more than by our judgment.

As there is no firm reason to be render'd .

Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;

Why he, a harmless necessary cat;

Why he, a woollen bag-pipe;^o but of force

Must yield to such inevitable shame

As to offend, himself being offended;]

So can I give no reason, nor I will not,

More than a lodg'd hate and a certain loathing

I bear Antonio, that I follow thus

60

A losing suit^o against him. Are you answer'd?

Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,

To excuse the current of thy cruelty.¹

Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

Bass. [Do all men kill the things they do not love?

Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?²

Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.

Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew.³

You may as well go stand upon the beach 70

And bid the main flood bate^o his usual height;

You may as well use question with the wolf

Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;⁴

You may as well forbid the mountain pines

To wag their high tops, and to make no noise,

When they are fretten^o with the gusts of heaven;

You may as well do anything most hard,

¹ What figure of speech is illustrated by the phrase, *The current of thy cruelty*?

² Note the difference in the point of view.

³ Remember you are arguing with Shylock, on whom all arguments are wasted.

⁴ What is the wolf understood to have done with the lamb?

As seek to soften that—than which what's harder?—
 His Jewish heart. Therefore, I do beseech you,
 Make no more offers, use no farther means, 80
 But with all brief and plain conveniency¹

Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.]

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats

Were in six parts and every part a ducat,

I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering
 none?^o

Shy. What judgment shall I dread, doing no
 wrong?

You have among you many a purchas'd slave,

Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,

You use in abject and in slavish parts^o 91

Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,

Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?

Why sweat they under burdens? [Let their beds

Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates

Be season'd with such viands?²] You will answer,

"The slaves are ours." So do I answer you.

The pound of flesh which I demand of him

Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.

If you deny me fie upon your law! 100

There is no force in the decrees of Venice.

I stand for judgment! answer, shall I have it?

Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court

Unless Bellario, a learned doctor

Whom I have sent for to determine this,

Come here to-day.

¹ A good example of the way in which Shakespeare sometimes pads out a line to make the necessary ten syllables.

² What is the meaning of *viand*?

Saler. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger. 109

Bass. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

Ant. I am a tainted wether¹ of the flock,
Meetest for death. The weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me.

[You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.]

*Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk.*²

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

Ner. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your Grace.
[Presenting letter.]

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly? 120

Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen; [but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy.³] Can no prayers pierce thee?

Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

Gra. O, be thou damn'd, execrable dog!
[And for thy life let justice be accus'd.^o

¹ Look up *wether*. Don't confuse the word with *weather*. What is the meaning of *meet* in the next line? We had it in line 65, Act III, Scene v.

² Of course no one on the stage recognizes Nerissa, not even her husband; but the audience knows her at once. Disguise, or mistaken identity, is a device frequently employed in the drama.

³ Do you recall the Shakespearean meaning of *envy*? We had it as an adjective in line 277 of the second scene of Act III.

Thou almost makest me waver in my faith
 To hold opinion with Pythagoras,^o 130
 That souls of animals infuse themselves
 Into the trunks of men. Thy currish spirit
 Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,
 Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
 And whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam
 Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
 Are wolfish, bloody, starv'd, and ravenous.¹

Shy. Till thou canst rail^o the seal from off my bond
 Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud.

[Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall 140
 To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.]

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
 A young and learned doctor^o to our court.
 Where is he?

Ner. He attendeth here hard by
 [To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart.] Some three or four of you
 Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
 Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

[*Reads.*] "Your Grace^o shall understand that
 at the receipt of your letter² I am very sick; but 150
 in the instant that your messenger came, in lov-
 ing visitation was with me a young doctor of
 Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted
 him with the cause in controversy between the
 Jew and Antonio the merchant. We turned
 o'er many books together. He is furnished
 with my opinion, which, bett' red with his own
 learning, ~~the greatness whereof I cannot~~

¹ Imitate Gratiano's voice and manner in delivering these lines.

² The Duke had sent for Bellario. (See line 105.)

enough commend,—comes¹ ~~with him~~, at my importunity, to fill up your Grace's request in 160 my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment ~~to let him lack a reverend estimation;~~² for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, ~~whose³ trial shall better publish his commendation."~~

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes;
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter PORTIA for ° *BALTHASAR.*

Give me your hand. Came you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome; take your place.³ 170

Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informèd throughly^o of the cause.

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;

[Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn⁴ you as you do proceed.]

You stand within his danger, do you not? 180

Ant. Ay, so he says.

¹ What is the subject of the verb *comes*? Look up the meaning of *importunity*.

² The antecedent of *whose* is meant to be Balthasar, or Portia.

³ What is Portia's position on the stage? Make a ground plan or sketch, showing the location of the various characters. What stage "properties" are necessary for this scene?

⁴ Look up *impugn* in the dictionary.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd;¹

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power, 190
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthronèd in the heart of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy; 200
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.² I have spoke thus much
To mitigate³ the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;

¹ It is the nature of mercy not to be enforced or *constrained*.
Memorize this famous speech to line 197.

² What part of the Lord's Prayer is here referred to?

³ Look up the meaning of *mitigate*.

Yea, twice the sum. If that will not suffice 210

I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er

~~On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.~~

If this will not suffice, it must appear

That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,¹

Wrest^o once the law to your authority.

To do a great right, do a little wrong,

And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice

Can alter a decree establishèd.²

'Twill be recorded for a precedent, 220

And many an error, by the same example,

Will rush into the state: It cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgment; yea, a Daniel!³

O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Por. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven!

~~Shall I lay perjury^o upon my soul?~~

~~No, not for Venice.~~

Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;

And lawfully by this the Jew may claim 231

A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off

Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful;

Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.^o

It doth appear you are a worthy judge;

You know the law, your exposition

Hath been most sound. I charge you by the law,

¹ To whom is Bassanio appealing? Here is *humor of situation*.

² How many syllables in *established*?

³ The prophet Daniel once acted as a judge and saved the life of an innocent woman. The story may be read in the Apochryphal book of *Sussannah*.

Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear 240
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.

Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.

Por. Why then, thus it is:

You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!

Por. [For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty°
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shy. 'Tis very true. O wise and upright judge! 250
How much more elder° art thou than thy looks!]

Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.¹

Shy. Ay, his breast;
So says the bond;—doth it not, noble judge?—
“Nearest his heart;” those are the very words.²

Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh?

Shy. I have them ready.

Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,°
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?

Por. It is not so express'd; but what of that? 260
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

Shy. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

Por. You, merchant, have you any thing to say?

Ant. But little; I am arm'd and well prepar'd.
Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare you well!

¹ Here is a fine example of dramatic suspense. The audience now supposes Antonio is done for.

² Apparently the bond is more explicit on this point than the agreement entered into in Act I, Scene III.

Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
[For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom. It is still¹ her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow 270
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance^o
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife;
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death;^o
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.²]
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough, 280
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.³

[Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which^o is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life.
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil to deliver you.

Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for
that,⁴

If she were by to hear you make the offer.

Gra. I have a wife, whom I protest I love; 290
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

¹ What did you find the old meaning of *still* to be? It has occurred several times in this sense.

² A lover, or friend.

³ Even at such a moment Antonio can force a little joke.

⁴ We who know the lawyer can afford to smile at this reply. To every one on the stage, Portia included, Bassanio's desperation is no fit subject for laughter.

Ner. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;¹

The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shy. [*Aside.*] These be the Christian husbands. I have
a daughter;

Would any of the stock of Barrabas^o

Had been her husband rather than a Christian! 

We trifle time. I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine;

The court awards it, and the law doth give it. 300

Shy. Most rightful judge!

Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast;

The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

Por. Tarry a little; there is something else.²

This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;

The words expressly are "a pound of flesh."

Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of
flesh;

But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed

One drop of Christian blood thy lands and goods

Are by the laws of Venice confiscate^o 311

Unto the state of Venice.

Gra. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!³

Shy. Is that the law?

Por. Thyself shall see the act;^o

For, as thou urgest justice, be assur'd

Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

¹ Nerissa's remark helps to make Portia's the funnier. It is usually the latter speech which gets the laugh. What is the purpose of the aside as a whole? See INTRODUCTION, *Technical Terms Connected with the Drama*, page xvi.

² What point in the play is reached in this line? See INTRODUCTION, *Technical Terms Connected with the Drama*, page xvi.

³ Gratiano is the first to grasp the significance of this new construction of the bond. Imagine him leaping to his feet to shout the line in Shylock's teeth.

Gra. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

Shy. I take this offer, then: pay the bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.

Bass. Here is the money.

Por. Soft!¹ 320

The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste.

He shall have nothing but the penalty.

~~*Gra.* O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!~~

Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less nor more

But just a pound of flesh. If thou cut'st more

Or less than a just pound, be it but so much

As makes it light or heavy in the substance

Or the division of the twentieth part

Of one poor scruple,² nay, if the scale do turn 330

But in the estimation of a hair,

Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.²

Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

~~Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.³~~

Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Por. He hath refus'd it in the open court.

He shall have merely justice and his bond.

Gra. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel! 340

I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.⁴

Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?

Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,

¹ What gesture should accompany the word?

² What do you think of Portia's interpretation of the bond? Would it hold good in a real court of law? Would the bond itself be legal?

³ In reading this line what word should be emphasized?

⁴ What function have these speeches of Gratiano's? See INTRODUCTION, *Technical Terms Connected with the Drama*, page xvi.

To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

Shy. Why, then the devil give him good of it!

I'll stay no longer question.^o

Por.

Tarry, Jew;

The law hath yet another hold on you.

It is enacted in the laws of Venice,

If it be prov'd against an alien¹

That by direct or indirect attempts

350

He seek the life of any citizen,

The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive

Shall seize one half his goods; the other half

Comes to the privy coffer^o of the state;

And the offender's life lies in the mercy

Of the Duke only, ~~'gainst all other voice.^o~~

In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;

[For it appears by manifest proceeding^o

That indirectly, and directly too,

Thou hast contriv'd against the very life

360

Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd

The danger formerly by me rehears'd.]

Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

Gra. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself.

[And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,

Thou hast not left the value of a cord;

Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.]

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,

I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.

For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;

370

The other half comes to the general state,

Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

Por. ~~Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.²~~

¹ Look up *alien* as a noun.

² Why does Portia wish to retain Antonio's half of the Jew's estate?

Shy. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that.

You take my house, when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I live.¹

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gra. ~~A halter gratis,² nothing else, for God's sake.~~

Ant. So please my lord the Duke and all the court 380

To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter.

[Two things provided more, that, for this favour,
He presently³ become a Christian;

The other, that he do record a gift,

Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,

Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.] 390

Duke. He shall do this, ~~or else I do recant~~

~~The pardon that I late pronounced here.~~

Por. Art thou contented, Jew? What dost thou say?

Shy. I am content.

Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;

I am not well. Send the deed after me,

And I will sign it.⁵

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Gra. ~~In christening shalt thou have two godfathers.⁶~~

¹ Now the figure of Shylock, always impressive, becomes tragic.

² What would the halter be for? We have had the word in Act II, Scene II, line 110.

³ What is the Shakespearean meaning of *presently*?

⁴ Find the meaning of this word as a transitive verb.

⁵ Think the situation over carefully and then decide whether Shylock is really sick or just pretending.

⁶ This is addressed to Shylock as he leaves. *Christening* refers to his compulsory baptism into the Christian faith.

Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more
To bring thee to the gallows,¹ not the font.^o 400

[Exit SHYLOCK.]

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Por. I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon.

I must away this night toward Padua,

And it is meet² I presently set forth.

Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.

Antonio, gratify^o this gentleman,

For in my mind you are much bound to him.

[Exeunt DUKE and his train.³

Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend

Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted

Of grievous penalties; in lieu⁴ whereof, 410

Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,

We freely cope your courteous pains withal.^o

Ant. And stand indebted, over and above,

In love and service to you evermore.

Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied;

And I, delivering you, am satisfied,

And therein do account myself well paid.

My mind was never yet more mercenary.⁵

I pray you, know me when we meet again.

I wish you well, and so I take my leave. 420

Bass. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further.⁶

Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,

Not as a fee; grant me two things, I pray you,

¹ Ten more would make twelve, the proper number for a jury to hang him. What is the meaning of *font*?

² We have met with this word as an adjective several times before. If you have forgotten it, look it up again.

³ Through what door does the Duke go out?

⁴ What is the meaning of *lieu*?

⁵ I was never more selfish than I am in the satisfaction I take in having delivered you from the Jew.

⁶ Explain the meaning of this line.

Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

[*To ANT.*] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them
for your sake;

[*To BASS.*] And for your love I'll take this ring
from you.

Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no
more;

And you in love shall not deny me this.

Bass. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!¹ 430

I will not shame myself to give you this.

Por. I will have nothing else but only this;

And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bass. There's more depends on this than on the value.

The dearest² ring in Venice will I give you,

And find it out by proclamation;

Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

Por. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers.

You taught me first to beg; and now methinks

You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd. 440

Bass. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;

And when she put it on, she made me vow

That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.³

An if your wife be not a mad-woman,

And know how well I have deserv'd the ring,

She would not hold out enemy for ever,

For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

[*Exeunt PORTIA and NERISSA.*]

¹ A poorly chosen excuse, as we, who know the learned doctor, can readily see.

² What meaning has the word *dear* in this line?

³ Was it fair of Portia to push her request so far? However, the fact that Bassanio does finally give her the ring makes good fun in the last act.

Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring;

Let his deservings and my love withal 450

Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.

Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him:

Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst.

Unto Antonio's house. Away! make haste.

[Exit GRATIANO.]

Come, you and I will thither¹ presently;

And in the morning early will we both

Fly toward Belmont. Come, Antonio. [*Exeunt.*]

[SCENE II]

[The same. Before SHYLOCK'S house.]

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA.²

Por. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed,

And let him sign it. We'll away to-night

And be a day before our husbands home.

This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en.

My Lord Bassanio upon more advice

Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat

Your company at dinner.

Por. That cannot be.

His ring I do accept most thankfully;

And so, I pray you, tell him; furthermore, 10

¹ Where?

*** How would Portia and Nerissa enter so as to indicate that they had passed on a little way down the street?**

I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.
Gra. That will I do.

Ner. [*Aside to PORTIA.*] Sir, I would speak with you.

I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep forever.¹

Por. [*Aside to NER.*] Thou mayst, I warrant. We
shall have old^o swearing

That they did give the rings away to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
Away! make haste; thou know'st where I
will tarry.

Ner. Come, good sir, will you show me to this
house? [*Exeunt.*² 20

[ACT FIFTH]

[SCENE I]

[*Belmont. Before PORTIA's house.*]³

Enter LORENZO and JESSICA.

Lor. The moon shines bright.⁴ In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan walls,
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid^o lay that night.

¹ Nerissa, having in true comedy manner imitated Portia in everything else, must follow her example with respect to the rings.

² Do both go out the same door?

³ What informs the audience that the place is now Belmont?

⁴ Notice the time-indication. How is the audience, witnessing a daylight performance, supposed to know it is night? What day of the time-analysis is this?—the night following the day of the trial, and therefore the same day? Or the night after?

Jes. In such a night

Did Thisbe^o fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,¹
And ran dismay'd away.

Lor. In such a night
Stood Dido^o with a willow in her hand 10
Upon the wild sea banks, and wav'd her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jes. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.^o

Lor. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love² did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.³

Lor. In such a night 20
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,^o
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jes. I would out-night you, did nobody come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

Steph. A friend.

Lor. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you,
friend?

¹ *Himself* is without antecedent here. To whom does it refer?

² Why an *unthrift* love? Perhaps *love* means *lover*.

³ Is Jessica serious?

Steph. Stephano is my name; and I bring word
 My mistress will before the break of day
 Be here at Belmont. She doth stray about 30
 By holy crosses,^o where she kneels and prays
 For happy wedlock hours.¹

Lor. Who comes with her?

Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.

I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

Lor. He is not, nor we have not^o heard from him.

But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
 And ceremoniously let us prepare
 Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT.

Laun. Sola, sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola, sola!

Lor. Who calls? 40

Laun. Sola! Did you see Master Lorenzo? Master
 Lorenzo, sola, sola?

Lor. Leave hollaing, man; here.

Laun. Sola! Where? Where?²

Lor. Here.

Laun. Tell him there's a post³ come from my mas-
 ter with his horn full of good news; my master
 will be here ere morning.⁴ [Exit.

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
 And yet no matter; why should we go in? 50
 My friend Stephano, signify, pray you,

¹ This is evidently what Portia has instructed the servant to say.

² It is supposed to be dark, so Launcelot cannot see the lovers.
 "Sola" is probably an imitation of the horn of the post.

³ Do you know the old meaning of *post*? Look it up.

⁴ Bassanio and Antonio have made almost as good time as Portia in getting back to Belmont. Perhaps they didn't stay all night in Venice after all. (Compare Act IV, Scene 1, line 456.)

Within the house,¹ your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air.

[Exit STEPHANO.]

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night
Become² the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven³
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.^o
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st 60
But in his motion like an angel sings,^o
Still⁴ quiring^o to the young-eyed cherubins.^o
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay^o
Doth grossly close it in we cannot hear it.⁵

Enter MUSICIANS.

Come, ho, and wake Diana^o with a hymn!
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music. [Music.⁶

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is your spirits are attentive. 70
For do but note a wild and wanton herd

¹ What represented "*within the house*" on Shakespeare's stage?

² What does *become* mean here?

³ What can Lorenzo mean by the *floor of heaven*?

⁴ *Still* again in its typical Shakespearean sense.

⁵ A good speech to memorize, particularly lines 54 to 65. All the while music has been playing *within the house*.

⁶ It is to be wished that we had the original music played during the first performances of *The Merchant of Venice*, but unfortunately none of it has been preserved. The instruments used were violins or violas, oboes, flutes, horns, lutes, and drums, in other words, practically the same instruments as form the basis of a modern orchestra.

Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;
If they but hear perchance¹ a trumpet sound,
Or any air² of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music; therefore the poet
Did feign³ that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and
floods;⁴ 80

Since nought⁵ so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.⁶
Let no such man be trusted.⁴ Mark the music.

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.*⁵

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams! 90
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Ner. When the moon shone we did not see the candle.

Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less.
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by; and then his state⁶
Empties itself as doth an inland brook

¹ Find the meaning of *perchance*.

² What is this meaning of the word *air*?

³ Since *there is* nought, etc.

⁴ Memorize the last six lines of the speech.

⁵ How are the ladies now dressed?

Into the main¹ of waters. Music! hark!

Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.^o

Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect;^o

Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day. 100

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark

When neither is attended;^o and I think

The nightingale, if she should sing by day,

When every goose is cackling, would be thought

No better a musician than the wren.

How many things by season season'd² are

To their right praise and true perfection!

Peace, ho! The moon sleeps with Endymion,^o

And would not be awak'd. [Music ceases.]

Lor. That is the voice, 110

Or I am much deceiv'd, of Portia.

Por. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,

By the bad voice.

Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.

Por. We have been praying for our husbands'
healths,

Which speed,^o we hope, the better for our words.

Are they return'd?

Lor. Madam, they are not yet;

But there is come a messenger before

To signify their coming.

Por. Go in, Nerissa;

Give order to my servants that they take

No note at all of our being absent hence; 120

Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you.

[A tucket³ sounds.]

¹ Find an appropriate meaning for *main* as a noun.

² What two meanings of the word *season* are here suggested?

³ Look up the word *tucket*.

Lor. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet.

We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;

It looks a little paler. 'Tis a day

Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their followers.

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,

If you would walk in absence of the sun.¹

Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;²

For a light wife doth make a heavy husband, 130

And never be Bassanio so for me;

But God sort all!° You are welcome home, my lord.

Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.

This is the man, this is Antonio,

To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Por. You should in all sense° be much bound to him,

For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.³

Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house.

It must appear in other ways than words, 140

Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.^o

Gra. [To NERISSA.] By yonder moon I swear you do
me wrong;

In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk. . . .

¹ "We should have daylight all the time if Portia were to make a practice of walking abroad at night." In other words, Portia's brilliancy is as great as that of the sun. Bassanio must have overheard Portia's last remark about the bright moonlight, and so converted it into a compliment. The *Antipodes* (pronounce An tîp o dez) are the people on the opposite side of the earth.

² This word has been punned on several times in the same way. What was the older meaning? See note 3, page 41.

³ What are the two meanings of *bound*?

Por. A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?

Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring

That she did give me, whose posy^o was

For all the world like cutler's¹ poetry

Upon a knife, "Love me, and leave me not."

Ner. What² talk you of the posy or the value?

You swore to me, when I did give it you, 150

That you would wear it till your hour of death,

And that it should lie with you in your grave.

Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,

You should have been respective,^o and have kept it.

Gave it a judge's clerk! No, God's my judge

The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

Gra. He will, an³ if he live to be a man.

Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,

A kind of boy, a little scrubbèd^o boy, 160

No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,

A prating⁴ boy, that begg'd it as a fee.

I could not for my heart deny it him.

Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,

To part so slightly with your wife's first gift,

A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger

And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.

I gave my love a ring, and made him swear

Never to part with it; and here he stands.

I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it 170

Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth

That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,

¹ What is a *cutler*?

² The word *what* here is an adverb. See if you can find it defined as such in your dictionary.

³ What is the meaning of *an*? See note 1, page 13. Why are both words used?

⁴ Look up *prating*.

You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief.

An 'twere to me, I should be mad^o at it.¹

Bass. [*Aside.*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
And swear I lost the ring defending it!

Gra. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed
Deserv'd it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine; 180
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

Por. What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you receiv'd of me.

Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it, it is gone.

Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed
Until I see the ring.²

Ner. Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine.

Bass. Sweet Portia, 190
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive^o for what I gave the ring,
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain³ the ring,

¹ This is a good piece of *suspense*. Observe the state of mind Portia's assurance puts Bassanio in.

² Did we see Nerissa beg Gratiano's ring of him? Or was that scene supposed to take place off-stage?

³ *Contain* for *retain*.

You would not then have parted with the ring. 200
 What man is there so much¹ unreasonable,
 If you had pleas'd to have defended it
 With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty°
 To urge° the thing held as a ceremony?²
 Nerissa teaches me what to believe;
 I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
 No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
 Which° did refuse three thousand ducats of me,
 And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him, 210
 And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away,—
 Even he that did uphold the very life
 Of my dear friend. What should° I say, sweet lady?
 I was enforc'd to send it after him;
 I was beset with shame and courtesy;
 My honour would not let ingratitude
 So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
 For, by these blessed candles of the night,³
 Had you been there I think you would have begg'd
 The ring of me to give the worthy doctor. 220

Por. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house.
 Since he hath got the jewel that I lov'd,
 And that which you did swear to keep for me,
 I will become as liberal as you;
 I'll not deny him anything I have. . . .

Ner. And I his clerk; therefore be well advis'd
 How you do leave me to mine own protection. . . .

Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

¹ Why the word *much*? Would it be used nowadays?

² Substitute another word for *ceremony*.

³ What are the *candles of the night*?

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Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforcèd wrong; 230
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—

Por. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly^o sees himself;
In each eye, one. Swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.¹

Bass. Nay, but hear me.
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.

Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried;^o I dare be bound again, 241
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.^o

Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,
And bid him keep it better than the other.

Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

Bass. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor! . . .

Gra. Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer, when the ways are fair enough!

Por. You are all amaz'd. 250

Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario.
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now return'd; I have not yet
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon;
There you shall find three of your argosies 260

¹ Portia is trying desperately to keep her anger alive.

Are richly come to harbour suddenly;
 You shall not know by what strange accident
 I chanced on this letter.

Ant. I am dumb.

Bass. Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

Gra. Were you the clerk? . . .

Bass. Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow.

When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;^o

For here I read for certain that my ships

Are safely come to road.¹

Por. How now, Lorenzo! 270

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

Ner. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.

There do I give to you and Jessica

From the rich Jew a special deed of gift,

After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna^o in the way

Of starvèd² people.

Por. It is almost morning,

And yet I am sure you are not satisfied

Of these events at full. Let us go in;

And charge us there upon inter'gatories,^o 280

And we will answer all things faithfully. . . .

Gra. Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing

So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.³

[*Exeunt.*]

¹ What is the meaning of *road*? See note 4, page 2.

² How many syllables in *starved*?

³ Gratiano has the last word, as usual.

What stage properties are necessary to present the scene in Elizabeth fashion? Read it through again with this question in mind. How was night indicated on a day-lighted stage?

Who is the hero of the play, Bassanio or Antonio? Is the play a comedy or a tragedy? Re-read pages xv-xvi of the INTRODUCTION, *Technical Terms Connected with the Drama.*

APPENDIX

I.—SOURCES OF THE STORY

The Merchant of Venice was twice published as a separate play in 1600, a fact which indicates that public interest in the comedy was still lively a number of years after its first performance. Two years earlier James Roberts had entered *The Marchaunt of Venyce* in the Stationer's Register, that is, copyrighted it, upon condition that it should not be printed "without license first had from the . . . Lord Chamberlain." Other indications point to a date somewhat earlier than 1598 for its writing and first performance.

In all probability Shakespeare drew his materials for the story from an older play, perhaps that of "the Jew . . . shown at the Bull" mentioned in Gosson's *School of Abuse* as "representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers and bloody mindes of usururs." Either the earlier playwright or Shakespeare himself, perhaps both, had access to the fourteenth-century Italian tale of *Il Pecorone* (*The Blockhead*), which contains all essential elements of *The Merchant of Venice* except the Lorenzo-Jessica episode. The device of the caskets as a means of winning Portia was probably drawn from the earlier play, as it does not occur in the Italian story, and the inscriptions on and in the various caskets may be reasonably assigned to a less practiced hand than

Shakespeare's. A summary of the tale in *Il Pecorone* may be of interest for purposes of comparison with the play.

Gianetto (the original of Bassanio) is very much beloved by his godfather Ansaldo, a wealthy merchant of Venice, who fits out a trading-vessel for him and sends him on his maiden voyage. On the way he comes to a port where, friends tell him, there dwells a wealthy and beautiful widow, the Lady of Belmonte. Many men have sought to marry her, and failing, have been ruined instead, for the condition attached is the forfeit of whatever wealth the suitor brings with him. Gianetto puts in at the port and sues for the lady's hand, but his wine is drugged and he fails, losing all he has brought. In the morning he is given a horse and makes the best of his way back to Venice, where he tells Ansaldo (the Antonio of *The Merchant of Venice*) that he has been shipwrecked. Ansaldo again fits him out with a vessel and cargo of rich merchandise, and Gianetto lays suit to the lady a second time, but fails, and is stripped of his goods as before. This time, however, he has made a favorable impression on the lady's waiting-maid, and feels encouraged to make a third attempt. A third time Ansaldo is induced to furnish the adventurer with a ship, though he has to borrow ten thousand ducats from a Jew to make the enterprise possible, the penalty of non-payment by a certain time being a pound of flesh cut from any part of the merchant's body. Gianetto sets sail with his companions as before and puts in secretly at the port of Belmonte. This time a maid warns him of the drugged wine, and he is enabled to meet the test and win the lady. Gianetto becomes lord of Belmonte and forgets all about Ansaldo in the round of pleasures which the court provides, until one day he is reminded

by a religious procession of the Jew's bond. He tells the lady the whole story, is showered with ducats, and hurries back to Venice, too late, however, to save his friend. The lady follows, disguised as a lawyer, and is called as an expert in the case. She saves the life of Ansaldo by the same device that Portia uses, allowing the Jew his pound of flesh, but denying him the right to any blood. As a reward she takes Gianetto's marriage ring, somewhat against his will, and departs. The two friends follow her to Belmonte, where the lady pretends to be angry over the loss of the ring and finally reveals her part in the trial. Everything ends happily with the marriage of Ansaldo to the damsel who had warned Gianetto of the drugged wine.

II.—SHAKESPEARE'S GRAMMAR

Some peculiar grammatical forms are found in our author, as in other writers of his time. A list of variations from modern usage may be of interest.

NOUNS. *Singular for plural.* "Are there *balance* here?" (Act IV, Scene 1, line 225.)

PRONOUNS. *Personal. Nominative for objective.* "All debts are cleared between you and *I*." (Act III, Scene 11, line 314.)

You and thou. *You* was the more polite form, customary among strangers and social equals. *Thou*, with its objective, *thee*, was a familiar form of address used among close friends, and also in speaking to servants. Note the various uses of *you* and *thou* in lines 40 to 60 of the fourth scene of Act III.

Neuter Possessive. *His*, the masculine form, was the ordinary possessive both for *he* and *it*. The word *its* as a possessive was a new word in Shakespeare's day, and not much used by the poets, who, then as now, favored archaic forms. "There is no vice so simple but assumes Some mark of virtue on *his* outward parts." (Act III, Scene II, lines 81, 82.)

Ethical Dative. The redundant, or meaningless personal pronoun called the Ethical Dative, or Dative of Interest, is common in Shakespeare. At an earlier date the pronoun indicated that the speaker had some personal interest in his statement, but even this slight meaning had disappeared by the time of Elizabeth. "Give *me* your present to one Master Bassanio." (Act II, Scene II, line 111.)

PRONOUNS. *Relative.* *Who* for *which*. "The first (casket), of gold, *who* this inscription bears." (Act II, Scene VII, line 4.)

Which for *who*. "Antonio, I am married to a wife *Which* is as dear to me as life itself." (Act IV, Scene 1, line 282-3.)

Nominative for *objective*. "For *who* love I so much?" (Act II, Scene VI, line 30.)

VERBS. *Auxiliaries.* The modern use of *shall*, *will*, *should*, *would*, *could*, etc., had not been determined in the sixteenth century. Passages like the following occur frequently: "If he should offer to choose and choose the right casket, you *should* refuse to perform your father's will if you *should* refuse to accept him." (Act I, Scene II, line 99-100.) "What *should* I say, sweet lady?" (Act V, Scene 1, line 213.)

Singular and *plural*. The singular form of the verb

is occasionally used with plural subject, and the plural form likewise with singular subject. "They have acquainted me with their determinations, which *is*, indeed, to return to their home." (Act I, Scene II, line 106.) "I am glad this parcel of wooers *are* so reasonable." (Act I, Scene II, line 114.)

Omission of verb. The verb is frequently omitted entirely, especially a verb of action used in connection with a preposition. "To him, father." (Act II, Scene II, line 122.)

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS. *Double Comparative and Superlative.* The words *more* and *most* were formerly used in addition to the endings *er* and *est* for showing degree. "How much *more elder* art thou than thy looks." (Act IV, Scene I, line 251.) Compare with *Julius Cæsar* (Act III, Scene II, line 187), "This was the *most unkindest* cut of all."

Double Negative. The negative was formerly repeated for the sake of emphasis. "Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, *nor* refuse *none*?" (Act I, Scene II, line 27.)

CONJUNCTIONS. *That for so that.* "I would be trebled twenty times myself, . . . ten thousand times more rich, *That* only to stand high in your account I might . . . Exceed account." (Act III, Scene II, line 153.)

Redundant that. The word *that* frequently occurs without any meaning in the modern sense. "I hate him for he is a Christian; But more for *that* in low simplicity He lends out money gratis." (Act I, Scene III, lines 43-5.) "If *that* mine eyes be true." (Act II, Scene VI, line 54.)

III.—SHAKESPEARE'S VERSE

The average line of Shakespeare's verse is ten syllables long; and among these ten syllables the accents fall pretty regularly on every other syllable. Note the following lines:

If I' | can catch' | him once' | up on' | the hip'
 He finds' | the joys' | of heav' | en here' | on earth'
 Or an' | y air' | of mu' | sic touch' | their ears'

Occasionally we have an extra syllable at the end, making eleven in all:

Pre sent' | ing me' | a sched' | ule. I' | will read' | it.
 And look' | what' notes' | and gar' | ments he' | doth give' | thee
 O dear' | dis cre' | tion, how' | his words' | are suit' | ed.

All of these lines contain five accented syllables, alternating with an equal number of unaccented syllables. The unit of measurement, therefore, proves to be an *iamb*, that is, a short syllable followed by a long; and the verse is said to be prevalingly *iambic*.

Not all lines are regular, however, and indeed the poet never intended his speeches to be read with a regularly alternating accent. Shakespeare had no intention of letting his verse degenerate into singsong. Note the irregularities in the following lines:

(a) First foot *trochaic*, that is, the reverse of *iambic*:

Emp' ties | it self' | as does' | an in' | land brook'
 Turns' to | a wild' | of noth' | ing save' | of joy'
 Part' ed | with su' | gar breath'. | So sweet' | a bar'

(b) First foot a *spondee*,—two accented syllables occurring together:

Hard' food' | for Mi' | das, I' | will none' | of thee'

Take' then' | thy bond', | take' thou | thy pound' | of flesh'

(c) Other spondees in the line:

A gol' | den mind' | stoops' not' | to show' | of dross'

The moon' | shines' bright.' | In such' | a night' | as this'

From the | true' seed' | of hon' | our! And how' | much' hon' | our

(d) Corresponding *pyrrhic* feet (two unaccented syllables in succession):

Stood' Di' | do with | a wil' | low in | her hand'

To discover Shakespeare's meters for yourself, read the lines naturally and mark the accents where they fall, without trying to force them into a stiff regularity of rhythm.



NOTES

ACT I. SCENE I.

[To THE STUDENT: The numbers at the left of each word indicate the numbered lines of the text.]

- 9. **Argosies:** sailing vessels.
- 10. **Signiors:** gentlemen.
- 10. **Burghers:** citizens.
- 11. **Pageants:** two-story movable structures on wheels, used in the open-air mystery plays popular before and during Shakespeare's lifetime, somewhat like the modern floats we sometimes see in parades. They formed both stage and scenery for the early Bible plays. See INTRODUCTION, *The Elizabethan Playhouse*, page xix.
- 13. **Curt'sy to them.** The smaller ships bob about on the waves, seeming to bow to the larger, steadier ones.
- 15. **Such venture forth:** so much money risked in ships.
- 26. **Flats:** flat sand, alternately covered and left bare by the tide.
- 28. **Vailing:** Lowering, dipping.
- 42. **Bottom:** vessel.
- 44. **Fortune:** outcome.
- 50. **Two-headed Janus:** the Roman god for whom the month January is named. He is usually represented with two faces, one looking toward the old year, the other toward the new.
- 53. **Bag-piper.** Find the word *bag-pipe* in your dictionary. Perhaps a picture is given of this curious musical instrument.
- 56. **Nestor:** the Greek warrior famous for his age and gravity.
- 67. **Must it be so? Must you leave us?**
- 74. **You have too much respect upon the world:** you worry too much about the opinion the world has of you.
- 84. **Alabaster:** a white, marble-like stone often carved into figures.
- 89. **Cream and mantle:** grow calm and expressionless.
- 90. **A wilful stillness entertain:** remain silent on purpose.

91. To be dressed in an opinion: to win a reputation for.
 92. Conceit: knowledge.
 93. As who should say: as if they should say.
 93. Sir Oracle: the great and only original truth-teller.
 The oracles were revelations of the Greek gods delivered to mankind through priests and natural phenomena.
 102. Gudgeon: a worthless fish, easily caught.
 110. For this gear: at this rate, in connection with this affair.
 113. Is that anything now? Does that mean anything?
 124. Port: appearance, manner.
 126. Abridg'd: cut off.
 127. Rate: rating, estimation.
 129. My time: my extravagant way of living.
 137. Within the eye of honor: if your plan is honorable.
 144. Proof: example, experiment.
 150. Or . . . or: either . . . or. The form is still used in poetry.
 158. Lay to me: tell me.
 160. Prest unto it: will do it at once.
 171. Colchos' strand: the island which contained the famous golden fleece for which Jason and his friends went in search. According to Greek legend Jason succeeded, with the help of Medea, the daughter of the king of Colchis, in overcoming all obstacles and carrying away the wonderful golden fleece, and along with it Medea herself. The story has been told by Hawthorne in his *Wonder Book*.
 175. Presages: foretells, promises.
 175. Thrift: success.
 185. Of my trust: on my security.

ACT I. SCENE II.

1. Troth: faith, pledged word.
 8. Superfluity: the man who has too much.
 9. Competency: the man who has just enough.
 29. Nor refuse none. The double negative was frequently used for emphasis.
 45. Makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts: claims great credit for the fact.
 47. The County Palatine: the Count Palatinate, a German nobleman.
 51. The weeping philosopher: a Greek philosopher by the name of Heraclitus who is said to have wept over the follies of mankind.

76. **Dumb-show:** a pantomime, a play without words.

78. **Doublet:** jacket, or coat.

78. **Round hose:** stockings.

99. **Should:** would. In early times the meaning of *shall* and *will*, *should* and *would*, etc., had not been exactly determined. In the next line the word *should* would now properly be the subjunctive form, *were*, followed by the infinitive *to refuse*.

112. **Sibylla.** The reference is to the Cumæan sibyl who won from Apollo a promise that she might live as many years as there were grains of sand in her hand.

130. **Four strangers.** Six have been named by Nerissa. *Four* is probably a misprint, or a mistake in copying.

138. **Condition:** temper, disposition.

140. **Shrive me . . . wive me:** If he be as dark complexioned as Africans usually are, even though he have the disposition of a saint, I should rather he were the priest who performs the ceremony than the man who becomes my husband.

141. **Sirrah:** a term used in addressing servants or inferiors.

Exeunt: the plural form of *exit*, used when more than one person leaves the stage.

ACT I. SCENE III.

1. **Three thousand ducats.** A ducat was worth about one dollar, but in view of the fact that money went ten times as far in Shakespeare's time the present value of the sum would be not less than thirty or thirty-five thousand dollars.

6. **May you stead me?** Will you help me?

20. **Rialto:** The stock-exchange of Venice, and also the bridge leading to it.

42. **A fawning publican:** a cringing "grafter."

44. **That.** The word is meaningless in this line, and is used mainly to fill out the verse to the customary ten syllables.

63. **Excess:** interest.

71. **Upon advantage:** with the understanding that interest be charged.

74. **As his wise mother wrought in his behalf.** The story of how Rebecca helped Jacob to cheat his elder brother out of his father's blessing is told in the twenty-seventh chapter of Genesis.

79. **Were compromis'd:** had agreed.

80. **Pied:** spotted, streaked.

84. **Eaning time:** at the time the lambs were born.

85. **Parti-colour'd:** many colored, "streaked and pied."

95. **Cite:** quote.

102. **Be beholding to you:** be indebted to you.
104. **Rated:** publicly denounced.
109. **Gaberdine:** a long cloak.
114. **Void your rheum:** spit upon.
115. **Spurn:** kick.
132. **If he break:** if he fails to repay the loan.
142. **Your single bond:** a contract signed only by yourself.
146. **Nominated for:** named as.
146. **Equal:** exact.
168. **Teaches.** The word should be *teach*, according to modern ideas of English grammar. Such disagreement between subject and predicate is common in Shakespeare. See *Shakespeare's Grammar*, page 114.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Flourish: a set of notes played on the trumpet to announce the arrival or departure of an important personage. The stage custom probably derived from the ancient *flourish* of trumpets which announced the coronation of a king.

2. **Livery:** dark complexion.
5. **Phœbus' fire.** Phœbus was the Greek god who drove the chariot of the sun.
8. **Aspect:** face, appearance.
17. **Scanted me:** limited my choice.
25. **The Sophy:** the Sultan of Persia.
26. **Won three fields of Sultan Solymán:** won three battles for Solymán the Magnificent, Emperor of the Turks.
32. **Lichas:** servant to Hercules, the famous strong man of Greek legend.
35. **Alcides:** Hercules, called Alcides because he was the grandson of Alcæus.
43. **Nor will not:** I will not; that is, I agree to the conditions you have named.

Cornets. The *Flourish* was given when an important personage left the stage, as well as just before his arrival.

ACT II. SCENE II.

11. **Pack:** go.
11. **Via!** Italian for *away!*
23. **God bless the mark!** A sort of apology for the oath which follows.

38. Try confusions with him: *try conclusions with him* was the phrase, but as it turns out perhaps *confusions* is the apter word after all, for Launcelot certainly tries to confuse his old father.

43. Marry: an old oath, shortened from "By our Mary." Who is the Mary here referred to?

44. God's sonties: God's saints.

55. A': he. A' is pronounced *aye*.

57. Your worship's: your honor's.

58. Ergo: Latin for *therefore*, a word once used in formal reasoning. Launcelot, of course, manages to apply it wrongly.

60. An't: if it.

64. Sisters Three: the three Fates, who, according to Greek mythology, determined the lives of mortals.

69. Hovel-post: the post supporting a hovel, or shed.

95. Lord worshipp'd might he be! An exclamation of surprise, like the modern "Goodness sakes alive!"

97. Fill-horse: *thill*-horse. *Thills* are the shafts of a buggy or wagon.

120. Liveries: colored uniforms. Find the old meaning of the word *livery* in your dictionary.

124. Gramercy! many thanks!

128. Infection: desire.

134. Scarce cater-cousins: scarcely on friendly terms.

150. Preferr'd: recommended.

159. Guarded: decorated with braid.

167. A simple coming-in: a mere trifle.

169. With the edge of a feather-bed. A feather-bed certainly cannot be said to have much of an edge. Launcelot's humor is mostly of the nonsense variety.

186. Parts: characteristics.

189. Liberal: bold, unbecoming.

192. I be misconstrued: my chances be spoiled. Accent the second syllable of the word *misconstrued*, as Shakespeare did.

199. Observance: customs.

202. Grandam: grandmother.

ACT II. SCENE III.

3. Some taste: some degree.

ACT II. SCENE IV.

5. Spoke us: provided ourselves.

26. Quaintly: smoothly, gracefully.

37. Peruse: read.

ACT II. SCENE V.

15. **Prodigal**: liberal, generous.
18. **Dream of money-bags**. Dreaming of money was supposed to betoken ill-luck.
24. **Black-Monday**: the Monday after Easter.
26. **Ash-Wednesday**: the first day of Lent, the forty-day period of fasting and meditation observed by the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches in celebration of Christ's last days on earth.
27. **Masques**: street entertainments in which the participants wore masks.
34. **Foppery**: folly, foolery.
35. **Jacob's staff**. See Genesis, xxxii, 10.
42. **Hagar's offspring**. Hagar was a bondwoman of Sarah, the wife of Abraham. As she was a servant, *Hagar's offspring* came to be a term of reproach.
46. **Drones**: male bees. When food becomes scarce in the hive the drones are ejected by the workers.

ACT II. SCENE VI.

5. **Venus' pigeons**. Doves were the birds of Venus, the Roman goddess of love, just as the eagle was the bird of Jove.
6. **Wont**: accustomed, used.
7. **Obliged faith**: promised faith, sworn vows.
11. **Untread his tedious measures**: return from a long journey.
11. **Unbated fire**: unabated spirit, freshness of spirit.
14. **Yunker**: a greenhorn.
15. **Scarfed**: decorated with flags.
17. **Prodigal**: an allusion to the Bible story of the Prodigal Son. Read it in the fifteenth chapter of Luke, verses 11 to 32.
27. **Albeit**: although.
44. **Obscur'd**: hidden.
47. **Close night**: dark night.
51. **By my hood**: by my soul, or by my faith. The phrase is doubtless abbreviated from "By my knighthood," or "By my maidenhood."
52. **Beahrew me**: may I be scolded,—a mild oath, indeed!
54. **That**. Here again the word is meaningless.

ACT II. SCENE VII.

4. **Who:** which. See *Shakespeare's Grammar*, page 114.
12. **Withal:** with it.
30. **Disabling of myself:** disparagement, or underestimation of myself.
40. **This shrine, this mortal-breathing saint:** the shrine or altar of this living saint, Portia.
41. **Hyrcanian deserts.** Hyrcania was a desert country in Asia famous for its tigers.
42. **Throughfares:** thoroughfares, streets.
51. **Rib her cerecloth:** enclose her funeral robes, as in a coffin. Coffins were sometimes made of lead.
57. **An angel stamped in gold:** The gold coin known as the *angel* was in Elizabeth's time worth about two and one-half dollars. It bore on one side a figure of the angel Michael slaying the dragon.
63. **A carrion Death:** a skull, or death's-head.
65. **Glisters:** glistens, or shines.

ACT II. SCENE VIII.

12. **Passion:** expression of strong emotion; rage.
27. **Reason'd:** talked.
29. **Miscarried:** went to pieces on the rocks.
39. **Slubber:** spoil by undue haste.
48. **Sensible:** sensitive.
52. **His embraced heaviness:** the melancholy to which he clings.

ACT II. SCENE IX.

- Servitor:** servant.
1. **Straight:** straightway, immediately.
19. **Address'd me:** prepared myself.
27. **Fond.** The word usually means *foolish* in Shakespeare.
28. **Martlet:** the martin.
32. **Jump with:** agree with.
38. **Cozen:** cheat.
44. **Should cover, etc.** Should wear their hats in all company who, as inferiors, now have to take them off.
46. **Peasantry:** the common people.
55. **Schedule:** a written paper.

68. **I wis:** I know.

82. **No heresy.** Literally, not contrary to church doctrine. The meaning is that the ancient saying is true.

89. **Sensible regrets:** substantial greetings, rich gifts. This meaning is brought out in the next lines.

90. **To wit:** namely. The expression is still used in legal documents.

90. **Commends:** commendations, complimentary speeches.

94. **Costly summer:** gorgeous with flowers and vegetation.

96. **Afeard:** an old form of *afraid*.

100. **Post:** messenger.

ACT III. SCENE I.

4. **The Goodwins:** the Goodwin sands, off the southeastern coast of England.

13. **Slips of prolixity:** wordiness, talkativeness.

21. **Amen:** so be it!

31. **Complexion:** nature.

39. **Rhenish:** Rhine wine, light in color.

70. **Sufferance:** endurance of wrong.

114. **Break:** fail in business; become bankrupt.

130. **Synagogue:** the Jewish church.

ACT III. SCENE II.

6. **In such a quality:** in such advice as I give you.

11. **I am then forsworn:** my oath would then be broken.

22. **Peize the time:** weigh each moment deliberately; to "kill" time.

23. **Eke:** stretch.

25. **The rack:** an instrument for torturing prisoners by stretching.

29. **Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love:** which makes me fear that I may lose the enjoying of my love.

36. **Had been:** is.

42. **Aloof:** at a distance.

44. **A swan-like end.** Legend has it that the swan sings just before its death.

53. **Summon him to marriage.** It was an old English custom to wake the bridegroom on his wedding morning with music under his window.

55. **Alcides:** another reference to Hercules. The passage al-

ludes to the hero's exploit in saving a Trojan maiden from the sea-monster to which she had been sacrificed. Portia thinks Bassanio as handsome as Hercules, but inspired with more love, since Hercules rescued the girl for the sake of some fine horses promised him by her father, King Laomedon.

57. **I stand for sacrifice:** I represent the maiden to be sacrificed.

58. **Dardanian wives:** Trojan women.

76. **Season'd with:** spoken by.

81. **Simple:** unmixed, purely vicious.

82. **His:** its. See *Shakespeare's Grammar*, page 114, for this use of the pronoun.

87. **Excrement:** that which *grows out of*; that is, the *beards* of line 85, which grow out of the face.

92. **Crisped:** curly.

97. **Guiled:** beguiling, deceitful.

103. **Drudge:** servant. The phrase alludes to the fact that silver is made into coins to serve mankind.

112. **Scant:** diminish, cut down.

115. **Demi-god:** half god, half mortal.

126. **Unfurnish'd:** without the other eye.

129. **The substance:** the reality, Portia herself.

130. **Continent:** that which contains.

136. **Hold your fortune for your bliss:** think the lady you have won will please you.

140. **To give and to receive:** to give a kiss, and to receive the lady in return.

155. **That:** so that. See *Shakespeare's Grammar*, page 115.

158. **Sum of something:** amounts only to this.

158. **To term in gross:** to consider altogether.

174. **Vantage to exclaim on you:** cause to reproach you.

183. **Express'd and not express'd:** spoken but not understood.

191. **You can wish none from me:** You can't deprive me of any of my happiness. Gratiano is playing with the two meanings of *from*.

192. **Your honors:** a term of respect, formerly used either in the singular or plural.

213. **Infidel:** unbeliever; one not a Christian.

236. **We are the Jasons; we have won the fleece.** See the note to Act I, Scene I, line 171; or, better still, read the story of the Golden Fleece in Hawthorne's *Wonder Book*.

238. **Shrewd:** hurtful.

242. **Constant:** self-possessed.

254. **State:** financial condition, wealth.

257. **Mere:** unmixed, absolute.

273. **Doth impeach the freedom of the state:** threatens the city with the loss of its integrity and good name if it fails to execute its own laws.

288. **Best condition'd:** best tempered.

307. **Show a merry cheer:** wear a cheerful countenance.

ACT III. SCENE III.

9. **Naughty:** wicked.

19. **Kept with:** lived with.

ACT III. SCENE IV.

2. **Conceit:** mind.

3. **Amity:** friendliness, forbearance.

14. **Must be needs:** must necessarily be.

14. **A like proportion:** a similarity.

15. **Lineaments:** features, face.

31. **Monastery:** nunnery, convent. In earlier times a monastery was the shelter for any of the monastic orders, whether of men or women.

33. **Imposition:** request.

53. **Tranect:** ferry. Venice is largely built upon islands.

63. **Accoutred:** dressed.

67. **A reed voice:** the "changing" voice of boys, with the surprising squeak in it.

68. **Frays:** fights.

75. **That:** so that. Compare line 155 of Act III, Scene II.

77. **Bragging Jacks:** conceited young men.

80. **Device:** plan.

ACT III. SCENE V.

3. **I fear you:** I fear for your soul. Launcelot is plaguing Jessica on the ground of her faith.

15. **Scylla . . . Charybdis:** the two dangerous rocks of Greek legend through which Ulysses and his ships had to pass.

20. **Enow:** enough.

36. **The best grace of wit:** the best thing wit can do.

56. **Humours and conceits:** whims and fancies.

69. **Mean it:** deserve it; that is, deserve a heaven-on-earth.

74. **Pawn'd:** given, thrown in.

82. **Digest.** The word formerly meant to reflect, to think upon, as well as to assimilate food.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Magnificoes: noblemen.

5. **Uncapable:** incapable.

20. **Strange:** surprising.

30. **Pluck commiseration:** win sympathy.

47. **A gaping pig:** a pig with an apple in its mouth, as served for Christmas dinner.

55. **Woollen bag-pipe.** The wind-bag of this instrument is usually enclosed in a woollen cloth.

61. **A losing suit:** one which Antonio is sure to lose.

71. **Bate:** abate, diminish.

76. **Fretten:** played upon, as of a musical instrument.

87. **How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?** Portia refers to the mercy Shylock will need to ask before the judgment seat of God.

91. **Parts:** ways, manners.

128. **And for thy life let justice be accus'd:** blame justice for letting you live after such a bloody deed.

130. **Pythagoras:** the Greek philosopher who believed that the souls of men after death entered into the bodies of the lower animals, thus beginning a long journey or *transmigration* from animal to animal until they at last reached human form again.

138. **Rail:** scold.

143. **Learned doctor:** a doctor of laws, not a physician.

149. **Your Grace:** a term of respect used in addressing the nobility.

163. **A reverend estimation:** a respectful consideration.

For Balthasar: dressed as Balthasar; that is, wearing the cap and gown of a doctor of laws.

173. **Thoroughly:** thoroughly. Shakespeare used the words *through* and *thorough* interchangeably.

215. **Wrest:** turn, twist.

229. **Perjury:** false swearing.

235. **Tenour:** meaning.

248. **Hath full relation to the penalty:** covers the case exactly; permits the exaction of the penalty.

251. **More elder:** the so-called Double Comparative. See *Shakespeare's Grammar*, page 115.

257. **On your charge:** at your expense.

271. **Lingering penance:** slow punishment.
275. **Speak me fair in death:** speak well of me after death.
283. **Which:** who. For this use of the pronoun see *Shakespeare's Grammar*, page 114.
296. **Stock of Barrabas:** offspring of Barabbas, the thief who was released to the Jewish mob in place of Christ. If you do not recall the circumstance look it up in the eighteenth chapter of John, verses 39 and 40.
311. **Confiscate:** forfeited.
314. **The act:** the law, or statute.
330. **Scruple:** a small weight.
346. **I'll stay no longer question:** I'll wait for no more talk on the subject.
354. **Coffer:** treasury.
356. **'Gainst all other voice:** not depending on any other person's opinion.
358. **Manifest proceeding:** open methods.
400. **Font:** the baptismal basin used in christening infants.
406. **Gratify:** repay.
412. **Cope your courteous pains withal:** pay you for your services.

ACT IV. SCENE II.

16. **Have old swearing:** have fun hearing them swear or protest.

ACT V. SCENE I.

6. **Cressid.** The story of the Trojan lover Troilus and his unfaithful Cressida has been told by Shakespeare himself in the play *Troilus and Cressida*.

7. **Thisbe.** The marriage of Pyramus and Thisbe was opposed by their parents; so the lovers agreed to run away from their homes and meet at the tomb of Ninus. Thisbe arrived first at the appointed place, but while waiting for Pyramus spied a lion near by eating the carcass of an ox. Thisbe fled, in her haste leaving her mantle behind. This the lion pounced upon and smeared with the blood of the ox. When Pyramus arrived he saw the lion with the bloody mantle, and concluding Thisbe had been devoured by the beast killed himself in his grief. When Thisbe plucked up courage to return she found the body of her lover beside that of the lion, and in despair committed suicide with his sword. Shakespeare made comic use of the story in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

10. **Dido:** Dido was the queen of Carthage who fell in love with Æneas on the occasion of his visit to her realm. Note that the classical allusions in this scene are all to famous lovers. The stories were doubtless familiar to most of Shakespeare's audience through the medium of earlier plays.

14. **Æson:** the aged father of Jason. Medea, who was an enchantress, prepared a broth which gave the old man back his youth.

21. **Shrew:** a scolding woman.

31. **Holy crosses:** shrines of saints, then common in English churchyards and by the waysides of Italy.

35. **Nor have we not:** another instance of the *double negative* used in Shakespeare's day for emphasis.

59. **Patines of bright gold.** The patine is a gold dish used in the celebration of *mass*, or the Lord's Supper. The word here evidently refers to the stars.

61. **Like an angel sings.** The old Ptolemaic astronomy explained the motion of planets and stars by placing them in hollow, transparent spheres. The motion of these concentric spheres around the earth at differing rates of speed produced the so-called *music of the spheres* to which the poets so frequently refer,—a singing sound like the spinning of many tops, which only ears attuned to higher things could hear. Shakespeare represents the music of the spheres as harmonizing with the angels' songs in heaven.

62. **Quiring:** *choiring*, singing.

62. **Cherubins:** angels.

64. **This muddy vesture of decay:** this earthly body.

66. **Diana:** the Roman goddess of the moon.

80. **Feign:** pretend.

80. **Drew trees, stones, and floods.** It is said that Orpheus sang so sweetly that even trees and rocks left their places to hear him.

87. **Erebus:** Hades.

95. **His state:** the glory of the substitute king.

98. **Of the house:** Portia's own paid musicians.

99. **Without respect:** unless attention is paid to it.

103. **Attended:** listened to.

109. **Endymion.** Diana, goddess of the moon as well as of the chase, fell in love with the boy Endymion, whom she charmed to sleep that she might visit him. The meaning of the line, of course, is that the moon has set.

115. **Speed:** prosper.

132. **God sort all:** God grant everyone his wish.

136. **In all sense:** in every sense, with good reason.